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ACADIAN CULTURE

VOLUME 2

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THE CAJUNS: THEIR HISTORY AND CULTURE

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VOLUME TWO

PART IV SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

PART V FOLKLIFE

PART VI CAJUN MUSIC

PART IV SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

FAMILY ORGANIZATION

The Traditional Pattern

Jay Edwards

Three principal factors combined to shape the traditional Cajun family: culture history, religion and the adaptation to rural life. The Acadian family cannot be considered unique or distinct in terms of the basic pattern of its organization. It is much like the families of many other rural ethnic groups in the U.S. In terms of the quality of its life and its psychological flavor, however, it is unique. One must always keep in mind, though, that the Cajun family may be as diverse as that of any other ethnic group. Although there are basic elements which characterize this cultural institution, individual families may vary greatly. The feelings and values which unite Cajun families are subtle and hard to pinpoint objectively. In attempting to summarize the shared quality of emotional experience which derives from a complex culture such as the Acadian, one cannot hope to attain a purely scientific profile.

The traditional Cajun family which existed in the latter part of the eighteenth and in the nineteenth centuries is not identical to the Cajun family of today. Collard (1975) suggested that the traditional family was characterized by five principal features:

1. The central role of the wife/mother. The Acadian mother was the principal vehicle of transmission and retension of Acadian values and Acadian culture. Considering the tiny size of the original Acadian population (less than four thousand), the fragmented nature of the

immigration, and the enormous number of outsiders who have been assimilated into the Acadian way of life, the strength of the Acadian woman and mother as the principal vehicle of acculturation must be considered nothing short of miraculous. When the Acadians first arrived in Louisiana, they joined relatively large numbers of Creoles, Spanish, Germans and Indians who were already living in and around the lands which they would colonize. Even before they were completely settled into their new pattern of life, Anglos, Irish, Germans, French, West Indian refugees and others began to immigrate and settle among them. Wave upon wave of outsiders descended upon the Acadian bayous and prairies. Yet, within only a generation or two, most of these outsiders and their descendants had been fully acculturated to Acadian culture. The number of Acadians added to the population through incorporation more than equalled the natural increase of the population (Smith and Parenton 1938).

The principal vehicle of transmission was the Acadian woman, supported by her circle of relatives. Her feat seems even more miraculous when we consider the fact that the Acadians were generally poorer than the outsiders they adopted and that rather severe ethnic antagonisms existed throughout the entire period.

2. and 3. The extended family and the joie de vivre. It is not easy to put one's finger on the reason that the Acadian woman was able to so easily subdue and dominate the culture of so many outsiders. One contributing factor is certainly to be found in the intense interaction which characterizes the Extended Acadian Family. Whatever else may be said of them, Acadians loved large families. They also encouraged

intense intercourse between members of these families on a regular basis. Hospitality was raised to a central theme of Acadian life. One could hardly pass the door of an Acadian house without an exchange of greetings and news, and the more normal pattern was to be invited inside to chat for a while. Food and drink and humorous repartee played a large role in these informal visits, and still does today. An ambience of intensive good cheer characterizes Acadian social interaction. This creates an atmosphere which may be unfamiliar, but which is highly attractive to many outsiders, particulary those of Anglo-saxon and Germanic background where family life is comparitively rigid, formal and even harsh.

The extended family provides the principal environment for Acadian social life. Large numbers of grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles gather on a regular basis. So many members of the family cannot help but exert a profound influence on the outsider, whether he be a suitor for a daughter of the family, or merely a visiting stranger. Although permission to wed a daughter of a family is often prerequisite on the approval of the entire extended family, that same extended family exerts a powerful psychological influence on the unwary outsider who is informally adopted into it, even temporarily. That influence is almost inescapeable for anyone who attends the boucherie, the afternoon veillée, the evening soiré, the fais do-do, the cock fight, the card game, the horse race. The social atmosphere of such regular gatherings--the lack of puritanical attitudes, the fostering of gregariousness and enjoyment for its own sake, the excitement of wagering on the game, the indulgence in story telling and the humorous

anticdote, the social and sexual attractions of the dance, and the continual replenishment of a festival atmosphere--all these and others contribute to the enjoyment of family life and its attraction for the outsider. The formal and informal events at which joie de vivre rules may be considered stages for the acting-out of uniquely Acadian performances. Whether a particular performance is overtly oriented towards the preparation and consumption of traditional foods such as the famous café-noir (drip coffee), gumbo, crawfish or fish cuisine, or whether it centers about an activity such as dancing, horse racing or even worshiping, it is invariably a family or kin-oriented activity. One principal rule of Acadian family life is that no one is to be left out of such an activity. For this reason small babies are brought to the fais do-do, rather than being left at home with a baby sitter. Young children dance with elderly adults on the dance floor of bars and resturants. Every child plays his role in the boucherie or in the harvesting of crops. This spirit of gregariousness extends to adults as well, of course, but also to fortunate strangers. So strong is this ethic that Acadian culture may be termed an incorporative culture. It deliberately aims to incorporate non-kin and other outsides into almost every field of activity and each sphere of intense social interaction. In this theme lies one of the strengths of Acadian culture. It is, I believe, not unrealistic to view it as a kind of adaptation for survival which has permitted the Acadians to prevail through many a threat to their identity and their physical well-being.

4. The role of the male. As in most families of European descent, the male is head of the Acadian household and principal director of its

economic and social destiny. This, of course, is the traditional pattern long encouraged by the Catholic church. Among Cajuns, however, the male plays his role in a very special way. Unlike the domineering and rather remote authoritarian father of "Middle High" Germanic culture, the Cajun father participates in intense interaction with his wife and children. Typically, he shows great compasion for children of all ages. From the earliest age the child is encouraged to participate in family activities of all types and to play an important role in each. No matter how trivial his actual material contribution may be, the child is given the impression that his effort has been important and that he is central, rather than peripheral to the core of family life and its activities.

This is not to suggest, however, that the matter of life was not a serious business for the Cajun family. For families living at the subsistence level, as most Acadians did in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, every hand was important and the skill with which each task was accomplished, critical to the collective well-being. Thus, each of the children of the family were carefully instructed in their necessary duties. For most, the work load was heavy to the point of being onerous. It was the father's role to see that the work was completed on time. His love for his children did not override his responsibilty for enforcing the rules and directing the proper behavior of each child. The difficulty of the tasks and the strictness of the Father's guidelines were always balanced, however, by the joie de vivre of the family get-together. When the work was done, everyone could relax and pass a good time.

5. Religion. The Catholic religion has also exerted considerable influence on the quality of the Acadian family. The values of the church shaped and supported the organization of the Acadian family. The church provided another setting for family affairs and gatherings. The calendrical round of feast days, fasting days, holy days and festivals was largely established by the calendar of the church. Many families attended church together and most planned festivals and other church sponsored events as group or cooperative projects.

> Weddings, christenings, funerals, and feastdays all had religious overtones. The priest assumed the role of "father-figure" and advisor in time of need. Work and religion were united through the blessing of the fields, tools, animals and boats (Ramsey 1957). The spirit of the church invaded each home and was apparent in attitudes and interactions between family members. Duties and privileges of husband and wife were sanctioned by the church and respect of child for parent and the responsibility of parent for child were advoctated by church doctrine. It is, in fact, difficult to regard any of the other four elements of Cajun family life, from the strength of the wife/mother to the lust for the "good live," which were not touched by the church (Collard 1975:113).

The rural environment and economy also played a role in the development of the Acadian family. Large families with many children to help out with the chores were adaptive in the environment of subsistence farming and hunting. As many as one dozen children was not considered unusual in a Cajun family. Of course the church also encouraged large families through its restrictions on contraception. Rural Acadian families were also characterized by a relatively high level of marriage between cousins and other relatives.

> Most early Cajun communities were composed of collections of relatives living on adjacent pieces of property, and the communities developed as local families grew. As a result, it was difficult for nonrelatives to meet and marriages were frequently made between cousins of varying degrees (first-

> cousin marriages are illegal in Louisiana but were sometimes performed anyway; more distant cousins can marry with no difficulty). Cousin marriage also had the advantage of keeping property within family groupings and sometimes were preferred by parents for this reason. Because there has been a great deal of residential continuity over the generations in most Cajun communities, today it is understood in small towns that most residents are related to one another (Esman 1985: 39).

The closeness of sedentary rural life lead to interesting patterns of marriage. For example it was not uncommon for pairs of siblings from one family to marry those of another family. Two brothers often married sisters from the same family. Elegible mates were often difficult to find, and the members of large families living nearby were an obvious choice. Another result of this pattern is the localization of surnames. In any single district of Acadiana, specific surnames, presumably those of the earliest or most prolific settlers, tend to predominate. It is not uncommon for a town to be dominated by less than a half dozen family names.

Another aspect of rural life was the age of marriage. Children tended to marry young. Ideally, the newly married couple would set up a household withing walking distance of one or both of their parents' houses. All relatives living nearby became part of a support group upon which the young couple could depend for financial help, for labor (as in the coup de main, for advise, and for the exchange of food or tools, as with the boucherie.

ACADIAN GIVEN NAMES AND NICKNAMES

Names

The following is drawn primarily from Reed (1976:30-32)). Before the coming of the cinema, the prairie Acadians often baptized their children with old classical names which had also been popular in France

in the eighteenth century. Examples of such names included:

Theodule Euclide Euchariste Duclide

Hyppolyte Ulysse Delphie Telesphore

From these, nicknames were derived for everyday use:

Titi Toto Lou-Lou Theo

Cariste Lilisse

One also commonly heard such names as:

Ferdinand Durelde Euzebe Armogene Azeline Armide

Arsemise Arcade Hermance Alcedius Elfege Jules

Octave Namard

Around 1898 there was an epidemic of:

Luna Duma Numa Dena Adena

Damard Lamard Jeanmard Namard

Around 1940 a new series of names became popular:

Milton Silton Wilton Tilton Gilton

Nilton and so fourth.

After the First World War, and with the arrival of the cinemas and radio (and later T.V.), one finds increasing popularity of modern Cajun names patterned upon English first names and shortened to a single syllable. These "Hollywoodish" names included:

Ted Tod Rod Ned Dee Lee Ray Kay Mae Jay

Bert Bob Joy Wayne Sue

Parents of this generation selected names which would not cause shame when they were used in the English speaking schools.

Even in modern times, however, certain Acadian parents give their unfortunate children unusual and humorous names. One hears occasionally:

Shelvadine Jasooline Armadella Virgine

Nicknames

The telephone directories of Acadiana provide one with a wealth of nickname of these, presumably from the Mamou area:

Luckette	Aloy	Dassa	Kai	Hackdeux
Nelkon	Gudley	Exand	Ulfoy	Oklie
Oftay	Quilea	Voicy	Prosse	Seig
Brace	Weekly	Easy	Gassie	Amaze
Polite	Acey	Palestine	Soilnor	Mercy
Zaquet	Waddie	Berbis	Vergin	Reversal

"In the good old days of ignorance, poverty and the great depression" It was not uncommon to discover a father who baptized all of his sons with the same first name. The most popular name was "Jean." Thus, one found families with:

Jean-Joseph Jean-Marie Jean-Charles Jean-Robert

Other fathers named all of their offspring, or all of their daughters with names which began with the same first letter:

Odile	Obele	Ophelia	Oliva	Orelia	Omerice
Olena	Olive	Overine	Ovelia	Ovenia	Ozone

SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE CAJUN FAMILY TODAY

Jay Edwards

What aspects of the traditional Acadian family survive in the 1980s? This is a difficult question to answer because of the rapid and uneven levels of social change occurring in Acadiana in the past four decades. While some Cajuns, particularly in the more rural and isolated communities, retain the traditional family pattern, most Cajuns today have moved towards the standard American model for surburban and rural families.

The principal cause of change in the Acadian family has been acculturation to the dominant American pattern of culture. This has been brought about through a combination of factors. Among these have been: the participation of many young Acadian men in the military in two world wars, dramatically improved roads and public transportation, the increased availability and standardization of Louisiana's English-language public education, scholarships and other opportunities for higher education, and the powerful motivation of better economic opportunities available to those who can "defend themselves" in the Anglo-American environment. Acadians live under basically the same economic and social pressures as other Americans. The period between 1930s, when jobs in the oil industry became available on a large scale, and the 1960s, when the mass media became the dominant force in supplying a unified standard for American culture to Acadian youth, tremendous changes occurred in Acadian culture and the Cajun family. Increasingly, the Acadian family has come to resemble its

Anglo-American counterpart. Nevertheless, the Acadian family still retains much of its distinctive flavor. Traditional values and practices have been modified, but they have not disappeared.

A few comparisons between the typical Acadian family and the Louisiana Anglo family may illustrate the point. These comparisions are based on data drawn from the Census of 1980. These data lump all persons of Louisiana French ancestory into a single category, so Acadians are grouped with Creole French for the purposes of comparison. There is little reason to believe that the figures would differ substantially if the census takers had distinguished between Acadian French and Creole French. Each of these findings is supported by additional social and ethnographic data, for example that for the Breaux Bridge area recently collected by Esman (1985: 39-53).

To begin with, Acadians live somewhat longer than their Anglo counterparts. The median age for Louisianians of English descent is 30.2, while that for the French-descended population is 31.4 (it must be those crawfish!).

The typical Acadian household is larger than its Anglo equivalent. The mean household size in Anglo-Louisiana is 2.14, while it is 2.94 for Louisiana French. The average family size is 3.28, as compared with 3.40 for French. The percentage of households with six or more persons is 5.35 for English and 6.67 for French. The larger Acadian household is the result of at least three factors:

Acadians like to keep their families together as long as possible. Unmarried children tend to stay at home living with their parents and contributing to the family economy. While only 77 percent of Anglo

children under the age of 18 remain in the family house living with both parents, 83.9% of French children do so.

Acadians tend to divorce at a lower rate than their Anglo counterparts. While 77.6% of Anglos in Louisiana have never been divorced (as of 1980), 81.8% of the French have remained married.

Acadians also tend to have a somewhat higher fertility rate than Anglos do. The mean number of children ever born is 1480 for each thousand Anglo women, and 1638 per one thousand French women.

The rates of fertility are changing rapidly, however, and the changes are much greater for Acadians than for Anglos. If the total number of women who have had children (married and unmarried) is considered, the fertility rate for Anglo women in the 35 to 44 age bracket is 1701, while it is 1780 for French women. This is about what we might expect from other figures. If we move to a younger age bracket, however, these figures change dramatically. In the bracket 15 to 24 years, the fertility rate for Anglo women is 468, but for Acadian women it is only 379. Young French women are bearing only 81% as many children as their Anglo counterparts! It is clear that young Acadian (French) women are postponing marriage and childbirth at an even higher level than Anglos are. Whether this is a phenomena common only to young Cajun women, or whether it will eventually characterize all Cajuns in Louisiana is something which we will have to wait to see.

The Modern Cajun Household

Modern Cajun women have accommodated their lives to modern American culture. While the traditional rural farmwife is still to be

found, she is no longer the most common type of Cajun wife. She is rapidly being replaced by the modern housewife. This housewife is often a working woman. In 1980, 39.4% of Anglo wives were employed (not including on farms), and 36.2% of French wives were similarly employed.

Neither does the Cajun woman speak French for the most part. Based on informal surveys by myself and Cajun scholars, women, far more than their men, speak English in most if not all occasions. It appears that the Cajun mother has been willing to give up her traditional language in order to provide a better education and life chances for her children. Many Cajun men do not live by the same values, however. They retain French as a major vehicle for communication, particularly in the male-dominated work place and in the traditional amusements as well. This produces the rather ironic situation in which young Cajun men learn English at home. Later, when they leave their families and enter a profession, many have occasion to pick up a French language that they have never spoken on a regular basis, despite their cultural identity.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF RURAL ACADIAN COMMUNITIES

Jay Edwards

Having now discussed the nature of the traditional Cajun family, we now turn our attention the organization of the community. Social organization in folk communities is, in large part, informal. Thus, our discussion is broken into two parts, one dealing with informal organization and the other formal.

This discussion is based on original research and secondary sources. Among the best sources were: Pellegrin 1949, Smith 1934, Parenton 1948. In the nineteenth century and the first half of twentieth, the social order of the Acadians was fixed firmly in a long-established rural mode of life firmly founded on three primary elements. These were: the nature of the farmstead, the organization of the rural community, and the relationships between the Cajun family to the larger socio-political order (parish and state government, primary and secondary services available in urban centers, etc.).

I. THE FARMSTEAD

The River Settlements

In the nineteenth century Acadiana was characterized by two basic forms of settlement. These were the RURAL STRIP VILLAGE and the PRAIRIE SETTLEMENT. Terrain and ecology determined the nature of the settlement pattern for the most part. Strip villages were, of course, located

along the waterways, principally Bayou Lafourche, The Mississippi River (Acadian Coast), and Bayou Teche; however, a great number of smaller bayous and rivers attracted similar settlement patterns. Along Bayous Teche and Lafourche, strip settlement was continuous for many miles (see illustration).

In his study of Bayou Lafourche in 1932, T. Lynn Smith noted a density of approximately thirty houses per mile on each side of the bayou in the area south of Thibodaux. The smaller farms averaged approximately 220 feet wide and a mile and a half deep (Fig. 1). Houses were constructed along the river road, near the bayou (Fig. 2). Larger plantations were also distributed along the eastern side of the bayou. At the time of his survey, French was the only language spoken in most of the homes.

In strip communities, communication originally was mostly by water. Each family had one or more pirogues or bateaux. Sail boats were also employed. Transportation was relatively easy, if slow. Later, when roads were built along the crests of the natural levees, more rapid horse-drawn and automobile transportation was available. The settlement pattern and transportation networks retained their strongly linear forms. After the colonial period, most local services such as a churches and stores were available in the immediate area (except for the more isolated communities such as those in lower Lafourche and Terrebonne parishes -Fig. 4). Saturday night dances were attended by families within a radius of fifty miles in 1932 (Smith 1934: 687). This is despite the fact that less than thirty percent of the families owned automobiles at that time.

The most common type of close neighbor in the strip community was a close relative: a child, a parent, or a sibling. Inheritance patterns which required that the land be divided lineally, resulted in family-owned sections which sometimes ran for a mile or more along the bayou. Often such sections were named after the founding family, for example Côte Broussard (Fig. 9).

Social interaction was intense in such a community. The hundred and twenty families surveyed by Smith contained 127 children under the age of 12, all of whom were potential playmates. Sixty of these children lived within a mile of each house. In addition, the local Catholic church had 1,200 members. The elementary school had 220 students, and the local high school, 51.

Adults, too, drew most of their friends and their help from the immediate vicinity of their home. Cooperative work parties were organized there. Friends and neighbors helped bring in the crops, build structures and move houses across the landscape. Such work was traditionally paid for in one of two ways--usually both. Everyone recognized the principle of reciprocity in cooperative work groups. People participated cheerfully because they knew that the same group would be around to help them at a later time. In addition, the larger undertakings, such as house moving or house erection, were compensated by the preparation of food and drink.

The Prairie Settlements

Life on the prairies in the nineteenth century was considerably different from that of the Eastern area of Acadiana. North and West of

New Iberia and Lafayette and extending across the prairies as far as Avoyelles and Evangeline Parishes, isolated local settlements were more common (Figs. 5 & 6). Settlement density was low. Here people often grouped into anses or "coves." Small groups of settlers were far more self-sufficient than those on the rivers. A much higher proportion of items needed to support daily life were produced on the farmstead, rather than being purchased. There was a concomitant tendency towards the development of strong in-group loyalties and even in-breeding. Cooperative labor such as the coup de main work group flourished in this environment.

The Prairie Cajun settlement seems to have been somewhat of a compromise between the typical European agricultural village, with its advantages of high social density and better services (school, church, stores), and the isolated American farmstead pattern with its close proximity to the fields and livestock.

The individual houses looked much like those of the river parishes:

> The houses were commonly of the Creole type; the fences were a yard paling fence, and field post-and-rail type. In every front yard there was a chinaball, or chinaberry, tree, its branches clipped back to provide firewood and to thicken the crown for better shade (Fig. 7).

Many such communities also were adjacent to water-ways so water transportation was often available, particularly along the tributaries of upper Bayou Teche, the Vermillion and Mermentau Rivers. However, land transportation was the only available method for many prairie communities. Roads were bad, particularly before the Huey Long era, so long-distance travel was difficult. Generally, buggies and farm wagons were used whenever a family travelled together. Isolation was severe.

Personal accounts tell of Cajun farm families on the prairies making only two or three long trips per year. One of these was generally to the Parish seat; there, legal business was conducted and annual taxes paid. If the trip was made in October, farm produce was brought to market to be sold and the profit from a year of difficult toil was realized. Family reunions, particularly at weddings, first communion and funerals also required extended trips. Aside from these brief periods of excitement, though, the world of the Cajun farmer, his wife and children was circumscribed by the horizon which surrounded the farm house.

II. THE RURAL COMMUNITY

Informal Organization

A couple of examples of the forms of informal social groupings typical of the rural community are discussed. All of these forms were common throughout Acadiana, however, they were far more apparent in the areas of denser settlement.

A. Merchants

Most commercial activity was peripatetic. Merchants in wagons traveled the roads stopping at each house and displaying their wares. Much emphasis seems to have been placed on what was new. Novelties in fabrics, kitchen utensils, tools and notions generated considerable enthusiasm among Cajun housewives and children. A secondary function--the transmission of news and gossip cannot be considered a minor factor in the success of the travelling merchant, ice-man, and

tinsmith. By the end of the 1920s, the itinerant peddlar had been replaced by truck-borne delivery men who worked for local merchants who had stores in Thibodaux, Raceland, Opelousas, Church Point or other local entrepôts. Chickens and particularly eggs were universally accepted as payment for goods of all types.

B. Fairs

Even in the nineteenth century, Cajuns loved festivals and fairs. In the early days, many such fairs were sponsored by churches. Later, civic organizations began to organize larger festivals, centered around local products or events. To the rural family, the festival was the social highlight of the year.

> Within the neighborhood, the annual church fair is a time of great celebration. Two days of festivities, Saturday and Sunday, with dances each night constitute the proceedings. Literally every one attends, male and female, young and old, well-to-do and poor, owner, tenant, and laborer, all are there. In addition, the whole-hearted enjoyment arising from the frequent assemblages of friends and relatives, gives recreation within the settlement a tone similar to that of the recreation characteristic of the village community (Smith 1934: 687).

A list of Festivals in Acadiana may be found in the Louisiana Folklife Guide (pp. 331-337).

C. Bals

Alcée Fortier gives a description of an Acadian bal [Duplantier 1981: 192--described in the 1880s]. A planter friend took Fortier to the country. They arrived at 8:00 p.m. at a large house with galleries all around. People were already dancing to the music of three fiddlers when the two "creoles" arrived. No admission fee was charged them and

this amazed Fortier. He was informed that only decently dressed, white people could get in free, but those admitted were obviously expected to buy their drinks from the proprietor. Beer, lemonade and coffee were the refreshments served. At midnight, supper was served; It was a chicken gumbo with rice, the national Creole dish. The men seemed ill-at-ease to Fortier, but the women caught his eye. They were elegant, well-dressed and exceedingly handsome with large, soft black eyes and black hair. French was spoken by all, but occasionally English was heard.

Fortier got to see the parc aux petits, where a number of children were sleeping in a bed. A gambling room also attracted his attention. A dozen men were playing cards...non-professionals. Out in the back by a barn, six men were gambling seriously by candlelight. These were the black sheep of the group.

The two gentlemen visitors had enough by 1:00 a.m., but the dance went on until 4:00 or 5:00 in the morning. The musicians played until the end, or at least stayed on, since they announced the end of the dance by firing a pistol in the air several times and crying out, "Le bal est fini! Lauren Post describes the following, concerning a bal (1962:175-77) In the 1890s.

> Marie Schexnaidre lived in Martin Duralde vacherie in Acadia Parish, just north of Rayne. She lived at a time when the old features of Acadian life were still in vogue, but when new features were coming in... She wrote, 'I attended a ball.' Then she proceeded to list 122 of them, giving dates, places (by the name of the owner of home or hall), and the occasion for the special dances. Most of them were week-end dances, but there were the usual holiday dances for Mardi Gras, Easter, and other such occasions. Special dances were the wedding balls which usually came in the fall of the year. For some of

these she was maid of honor. Further along--'I danced with'--and she listed 187 men and boys. Apparently she names a man only when she danced with him for the first time.

Formal Organization

Several patterns of continuing relations were formally recognized in Cajun communities. These were based primarily on wealth and land ownership, on religion and on race. Other factors such as education and profession played roles as well. Here we shall outline only one of these institutions, though research should be conducted on any of them considered for special treatment in the Cajun cultural centers.

Economic Stratification

Perhaps the major factor in the determination of a family's position in the community was its economic basis. Since most Cajun communities were virtually without industry, wealth was generated either through commercial enterprises or through agricultural pursuits. As of about 1940, the following figures are probably about average for rural Acadiana (drawn from census material). Approximately 77% of the residents of Acadian parishes lived on farms, more in the west than in eastern Acadiana. About 70% of the working people worked on farms. The next most important occupation was wholesale and retail trade, with about 7% of the total people employed, then domestic help with slightly over 5% (Pelligrin 1949:96). All other occupations employed 3% or less, with fishing and forestry exploitation being the most important.

Fifty to sixty percent of the total land area of Acadiana was occupied by farmland. However, only about 34% of the total number of farmers in Acadiana (10 parishes studied) owned their own farms in

1939. This figure is somewhat higher for Cajuns, as black families are also included in the statistics for farm ownership. A majority of 66% of all farmers operated as tenant farmers in 1939. Only twenty years later, in 1959, these figures had almost reversed themselves. A full 60% of the full-time farmers in Acadiana owned part or all of their own farms, while 40% operated as tenants. This represents a considerable economic achievement in only two decades.

The mode of tenancy lead to a considerable disparity in wealth commanded by individual families. For the most part tenants worked in one of two ways. Cash tenants rented their farms for cash and took the total of whatever profits they could earn. Most tenants, however, could not afford the heavy initial cash outlay. They operated as share tenants who supplied labor and who received approximately half of their products. The high number of Acadian tenant farmers in 1939 is surprising in light of the fact that Louisiana had much land to give away and that originally the Acadian families had been given large amounts of land for absolutely nothing. However, during the civil war, severe economic stresses drove many families from their land or deeply into debt. Many lost their farms. It is encouraging to see that industrious Cajuns who were willing to work as farmers were able to regain the status of farm owners in such a short period.

It is interesting to compare the economic bases of eastern (riverine) Acadiana and western (prairie) Acadiana in respect to its economic practices. In five eastern parishes of Acadiana in 1939 (Assumption, Iberia, Lafourche, St. James and Terrebone), only 4336 farms existed. Most of the population worked in non- farm occupations.

Of those who did farm, 57% owned a part or all of their farms. In five western parishes of Acadiana in the same year (Acadia, Evangeline, Lafayette, St. Landry and St. Martin), 22,297 farms existed, of which only 30% were owned by the person who worked it. In other words, 70% of the prairie parish farmers
were tenant farmers in that year.

In the year 1959, however the number of privately owned farms had risen to 77% in the east. In the west, 57% of the farms were now privately owned. The total number of privately owned farms increased by 9% in that period, while the total number of tenant farmers decreased 62% in the same period. The Cajun farmer was better off than he had been a mere two decades before. A large number of Cajuns had entered the non-farm work force. Indeed, by 1980, 36% of Cajun families now had working wives. Family income had risen substantially and housing conditions had also improved. However, Cajuns were still not quite as well off as Creoles and those of Anglo descent, on the average. In 1970 the median family income in Evangeline and Avoyelles parishes averaged less than $4,600.00 per annum, the lowest rate in the state (see attached map).

Most Cajuns, particularly the poorer families, augmented their farm incomes with subsistence hunting and gathering. Even today, many Cajun men hunt, fish and trap fifty or more days per year. A chart of the seasonal round is provided as an example of the kinds of subsistence activities which occur in the Atchafalaya basin throughout the year. The same activities in other portions of Louisiana may vary in specific times and places. The enclosed charts were derived from the research of

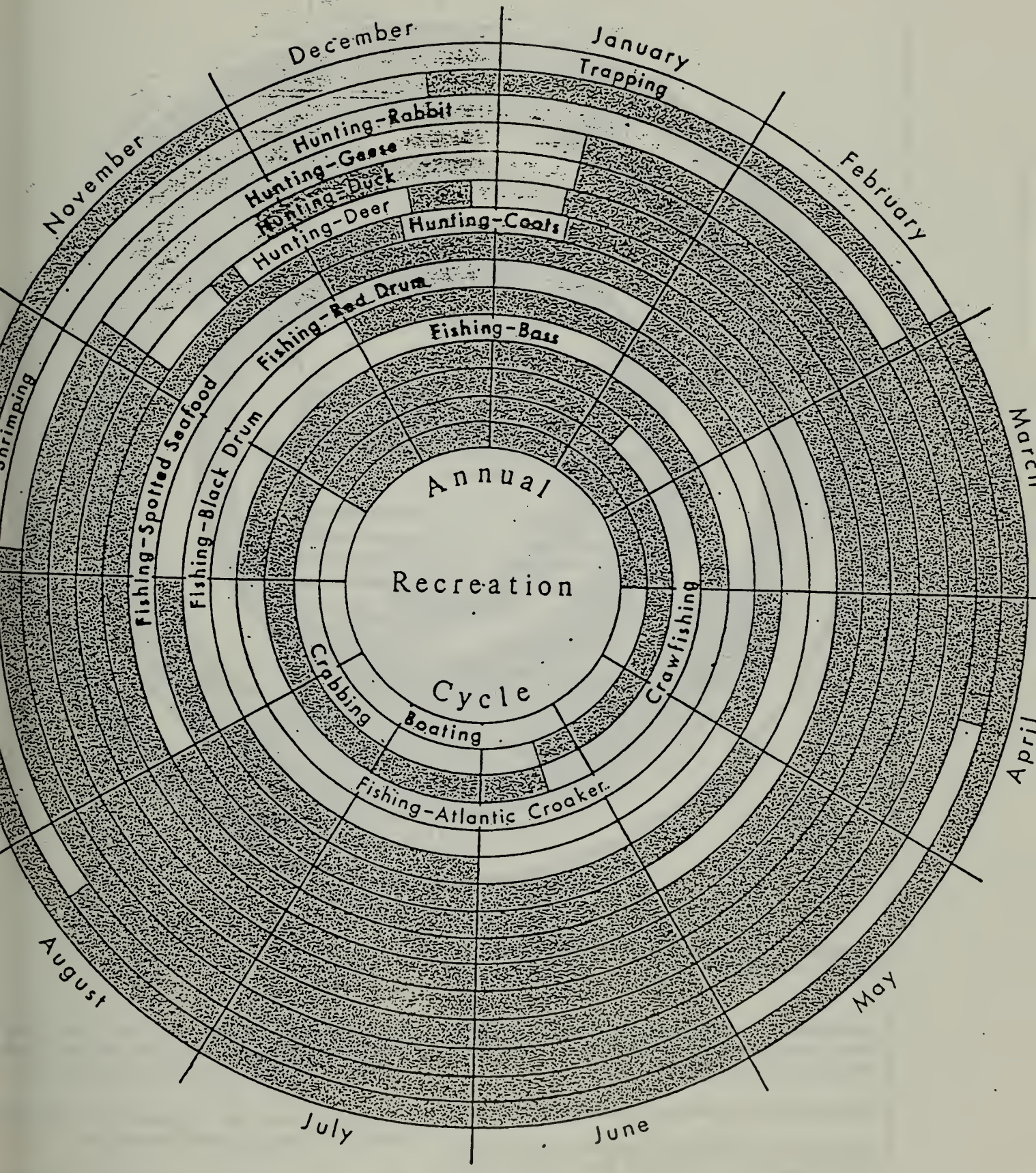
Malcolm Comeaux. Specific dates based on state regulations in 1980 are included.

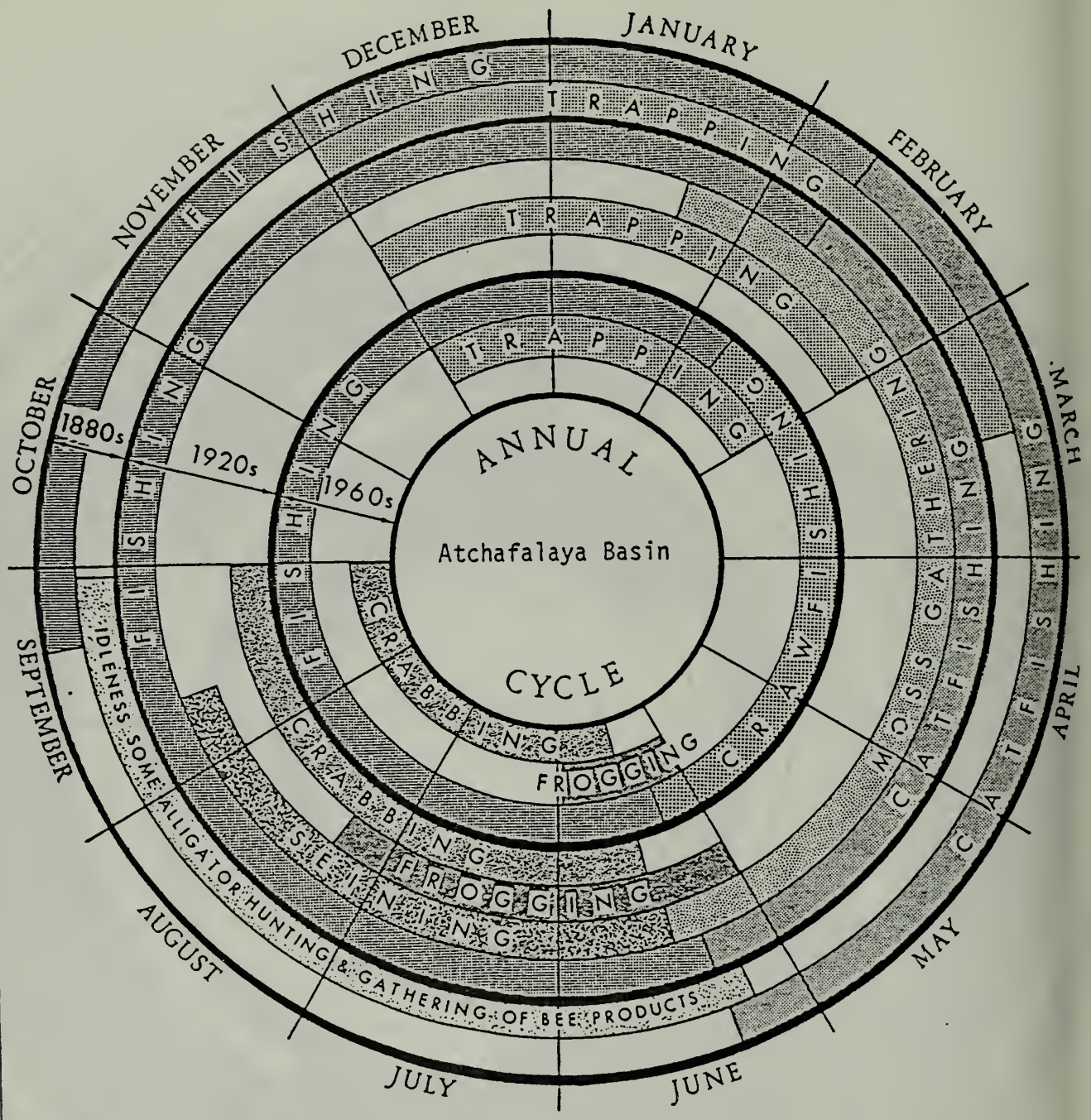
A Chart Of The Seasonal Round

A charts illustrating the seasonal round is recommended. The chart depicts the hunting, fishing, trapping and recreational round. Use the two diagram included here as a base, but an artist will have to redesign it somewhat. The hunting and fishing dates may be adjusted to the current year's regulations, but these change annually. In my opinion it would be better to use approximate traditional dates in the chart, and include a note specifying that specific dates change from year to year.

Several of the important dates for HUNTING IN THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN to be included (1987 regulations only):

Deer, no dogs:	Nov. 21 - 29
Deer, dogs	Dec. 5 - May 17
Turkey	Mar. 26 - April 24
Squirrel	Oct. 3 - Jan 17 (all year)
Rabbits	Oct. 3 - Feb 28 (all year)
Frogs	Mostly June-July
Trapping (Nutria)	Dec. - Feb. 28
Duck, Coots	Nov. 21 - Dec. 1, Dec. 20 - Jan 18
Geese	Nov. 22 - Jan. 30
Alligator (commercial)	Sept. 5 - Oct. 5
Shrimping (commercial)	Aug. 17 - Dec. 21
Crabbing (commercial)	June 15 - Sept. 30
Crawfishing (commercial)	Feb. 10 - June 10


December
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
November
Trapping
Hunting-Rabbit
Hunting-Geese
Hunting-Duck
Hunting-Deer
Hunting-Coats
Fishing-Red Drum
Fishing-Bass
Fishing-Spotted Seafood
Fishing-Black Drum
Shrimping
Crawfishing
Crabbing
Boating
Fishing-Atlantic Croaker
Annual
Recreation
Cycle



Atchafalaya Basin annual work cycle: chart by Malcolm Comeaux

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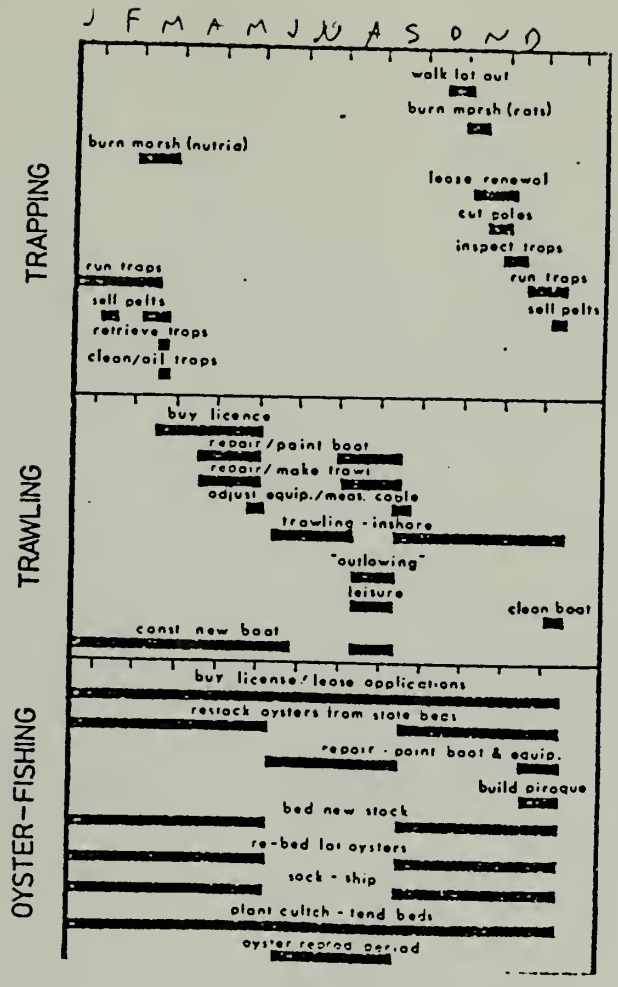

Three principal components of the marshdweller's seasonal regime (Source:Pierce: 1979)

PART V FOLKLIFE

ACADIAN FOLK LIFE IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, CA. 1840-CA. 1900

Carl A. Brasseaux

The development of Acadian society in the mid-to-late nineteenth century has been almost completely neglected by historians. What little is known about the era is based primarily upon travelogues, written by outsiders who were generally interested only in the more exotic aspects of local life. Almost without exception, these observers failed to comprehend the complexity of Acadian society and therefore totally ignored all but the most impoverished strata of the community. This article thus necessarily reflects the focus of these primary source accounts.

Despite the emergence of distinctive socio-economic groups within the antebellum Cajun community, members of the lower social strata of Acadian society, particularly yeoman farmers and petit habitants (subsistence farmers), shared a life style, language, and values little different from those of their more egalitarian forebears. The survival of traditional Acadian culture was a direct result of Cajun social institutions and agricultural practices, which promoted economic self-sufficiency and group solidarity.

This is not to say that the Acadians were hostile to strangers. Early nineteenth-century travellers who visited Cajun homes consistently praised Acadian hospitalilty. But, though the outsider was welcome, his materialistic values, strange customs, competitiveness, and preoccupation with business were not, at least among the poorer classes. Indeed, most Acadian yeomen and petit

habitants flatly rejected American ideals, preferring instead their fathers' precapitalistic values and folkways.

This value system is vividly reflected in all aspects of traditional Acadian life. In agriculture, for example, Alcee Fortier, prominent turn-of-the-century Louisiana historian, noted that postbellum Cajuns were "laborious, but they appear to be satisfied, if by cultivating their patch of ground with their sons, they manage to live with a little comfort." The 1850 agricultural census indicates that although the typical yeoman was capable of tilling fifteen acres of land, most farmers cultivated only four to twelve acres, depending upon the needs of their families and the number of sons in the family labor pool. Indeed, of the ninety Cajun farms listed in the 1850 agricultural census of Terrebonne Parish, only twenty-three boasted more than fifteen cultivated acres.

Such small-scale farming obligated the Acadian farmer to engage in seasonal occupations to support his family. Plowing, planting, hoeing, mending of fences, branding of calves and seasonal relocation of his herd, which usually grazed on public lands throughout the cooler portion of the year, to summer pasturage, filled the farmer's spring and early summer days. The comparatively inactive summer, and early fall growing season provided the petit habitant with the opportunity to undertake extended hunting and fishing expeditions. These hunting forays, which occasionally ranged as far as the central Atchafalaya Basin and the Gulf Coast and which endured as long as two weeks, furnished Cajun families with small quantities of fresh meat, thus minimizing the need to slaughter domesticated livestock which, in the

prairie parishes, ranged without supervision on unclaimed prairie lands, in the sultry summer months when fresh and even salted meat spoiled quickly.

Cool weather signalled the herd's return to winter pasturage, usually in wooded areas, as well as the beginning of the harvest season. The harvest on the Acadian frontier was a communal undertaking in which all members of the household, as well as "large numbers" of male and female ramasseurs participated. The fruits of each field were gathered in turn, and workers frequently labored "by moonlight" to "pick . . . every boll of cotton." Despite the long hours, the ramasserie , or communal harvest, took on a festive atmosphere. One observer noted that the workers, who were provided large quantities of gateaux de syrop, coffee, and whiskey by the host family, punctuated the monotony of cotton-picking with "shouts of joy, songs, and animated talk."

The ramasserie was nevertheless a serious undertaking, as manifested in the long work days, for the corn, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas, beans, pumpkins, okra, and rice produced on the small farms constituted the farmers' main source of sustenance in the upcoming year. Products of the family farm were supplemented by home-grown fruit, wild game and domestic livestock. Pork production in the bayou and river parishes, as well as beef production in the prairie parishes served as the petit habitants' principal source of meat. Travellers' accounts, however, indicate that fresh beef and pork, as well as old and unproductive hens and roosters served far less frequently than eggs, salk pork, and wild game.

Blessed with such a broad variety of foods, the Acadian cook had little need for store-bought products. In fact, with the exception of small quantities of flour, which could not be produced locally, cuisinières relied exclusively upon home-grown vegetables. The dishes which they prepared (and which would now be called "soul food") were remarkably similar to those consumed by poor whites throughout the Deep South. Frederick Law Olmsted, the famous New York landscape architect who toured Louisiana twice in the 1850s, recalled in his travelogs meals served to him by an Acadian family in St. Landry Parish:

> Upon the supper-table, we found two washbowls, one filled with milk, the other for molasses. We asked for water, which was given us in a battered tin cup. The dishes, besides the bacon and bread, were fried eggs and sweet potatoes. The bowl of molasses stood in the centre of the table, and we were pressed to partake of it, as the family did, by dipping in it bits of bread. But how it was expected to be used at breakfast, when we had bacon and potatoes, with spoons, but no bread, I cannot imagine.

Though milk and bread were delicacies reserved for celebrations and special guests, meals were, as Olmsted suggests, rather mundane gastronomical experiences, noteworthy only for their monotonous lack of variety. Cornbread, boiled Irish potatoes, baked sweet potatoes, fresh peas or beans, and meat (fresh meat in summer and salted meat during winter) or wild game were the mainstays of the nineteenth century Acadian diet. The meat of semi-wild, grass-fed longhorn cattle, wild game, and old chickens was invariably tough and thus required lengthy cooking for tenderization. Salted meats required extensive boiling, usually with Irish potatoes, to reduce high sodium-chloride levels.

The extensive use of boiling techniques in the preparation of foods, the legacy of colonial Acadian cuisine, reflects the adaptation

of traditional Acadian dishes to Louisiana products, hence the appearance of roux-based stews, gumbos, and gravies. Boiling water was also used in the preparation of small quantities of home-grown providence rice, for jambalaya; for corn soup, a dish quite similar to traditional Acadian fricot; and for crawfish, which were harvested in maraises on meatless lenten days. Also boiled, usually in gumbos, were saltwater shellfish caught during coastal hunting and fishing forays by Acadian farmers from the lower prairies and the Lafourche area. Finally, although not mentioned in antebellum travel accounts, boudin and hogshead cheese undoubtedly constituted minor rungs in traditional Cajun cuisine and were probably produced only during winter boucheries. Like other products of the early Cajun kitchen, these delicacies were cooked in boiling water. Boiling techniques were dictated not only by the toughness of locally produced meats, agricultural produce, and the game, but also by extant cooking technology as well. Lacking funds for the acquisition of Dutch ovens, the overwhelming majority of Cajun cooks prepared meals in kettles suspended above the hearth. Frying pans were quite scarce in mid-nineteenth century Acadian homes and appear to have been used primarily to cook couche-couche (fried corn meal) and to bake cornbread.

Acadian adaptability and reliance upon locally produced materials was also evidenced in nineteenth-century clothing production. In Acadian households on both sides of the Atchafalaya, Acadian women and children went into the fields to gather yellow cotton, produced in small quantities on the family farm. Following the harvest, cotton

seeds were removed from the lint either by hand cards or with primitive, pre-Whitney cotton gins, closely resembling the wringer mechanisms on early washing machines. Women, assisted by their daughters, then spun cotton fibers into threads, which were ultimately woven into cottonade on the family loom. In some areas, particularly in the prairie region, small quantities of cotton fiber were carded and combined with wool for the manufacture of a heavyweight winter cloth called jeture de laine. Summer and winter fabrics were then dyed blue, white, red, brown, and black with natural dyes either produced on the family habitation or gathered in the neighboring woods, and then fashioned into clothing.

Clothing styles remained remarkably static among petit habitants throughout the nineteenth century. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the typical man's outfit consisted of knee-length pants, called braquettes, cottonade shirts and jackets, and capots, heavy outer coats with long tails worn for formal occasions. Headgear consisted of hand-woven palmetto hats. With the exception of men's pants, which became ankle-length garments by the 1860s, this outfit served as the basic male costume throughout the antebellum and Civil War years. Only with the coming of the railroad in the 1880s and the simultaneous introduction of large, affordable quantities of manufactured cloth, did cottonade garments begin to fade from use, at least in the portion of Acadiana west of the Atchafalaya.

Like its male counterpart, the female costume changed little during the early nineteenth century. This distinctive mode of dress is described in great detail by the so-called Anonymous Breaux Manuscript

(attributed to Chief Justice Joseph A. Breaux):

> The women used to be dressed in very bright materials, with varied and often clashing hues. The skirts were made of woolen cloth with red, yellow, violet, and green stripes; woolen or cotton stockings were grey or white. A corset [the upper portion of the dress] was made with material different from that of the skirt. This garment allowed the real corset, which was usually dyed red, to be seen above the belt. This outfit was complemented by either wide-striped, and brilliantly colored kerchiefs, or, more commonly, garde-soleils, cotton sun bonnets with a barbe, or shoulder-length sunshade.

In addition to their own clothes, Acadian women produced clothing for their children. Before the Civil War, "children of both sexes wore a dress with a catch at the back. Boys wore neither breeches nor trousers before six or seven years." Children were also not permitted to wear moccasins or cantiers until the age of "ten or twelve."

All of the materials used in the domestic manufacture of clothing, except for small quantites of calico, were the product of home industries. Acadian home manufactures, however, were not confined to clothing. Acadian women also produced fine mosquito netting, cotton sheets, cotton blankets, cotton and wool quilts, and cotton bed shirts.

Footwear was also produced at home with domestically grown materials. Along Bayou Lafourche, Acadians wore sabots (wooden shoes) until the Civil War. River and prairie Acadian women wore cowhide and deerskin moccasins, while men wore cantiers, moccasins with knee-length leather leggings. Use of this footwear persisted among poorer Cajuns until the late nineteenth century. In more affluent circles, Acadian women used revenues from the sale of eggs and other barnyard products to purchase "shoes brought from the East or imported from England and France." Shoes were a "luxury" and, except for church services and

formal occasions, such as weddings and funerals, Acadians went barefoot. According to Dr. Alfred Duperier, Acadian "girls going to church, or to a ball, would often carry their shoes in hand, to be worn only when they reached their destination. At home the shoes were carefully hung from the ceiling." The reverence with which Cajun women cared for their shoes also extended to their best dress. According to Alexandre Barde, Acadian women kept in the family armoire a special hand-made dress, mantilla, gloves, and cheap jewelry for social gatherings, particularly bals de maisons.

Though the fabrication and care of clothing and shoes fell clearly within the female sphere of activities, construction of implements, wagons, furniture, and homes fell decidedly within the male domain. Throughout the antebellum period, Cajun farmers relied exclusively upon home-made agricultural implements, particularly ox-drawn wooden plows and harrows. Also made by petit habitants were ox-carts for the transportation of hay, corn, and cotton. In addition, though Cajun men traveled on horseback, Acadian women utilized horse-drawn calèches, gigs whose frames, body, wheels, axles, leather harness, tracings, and shock absorbers, even the feather cushions, were all produced by hand on Cajun habitations. The use of home-grown products also characterized construction of Acadian homes, barns, furniture, and fences. In the dry fall months, Cajun farmers in waterbottom areas would fell cypress trees along their swampy back property lines, and then haul the timber to building sites with teams of oxen. Having reached their destination, the logs were split and fashioned into building timbers. Assisted by friends and neighbors, the builder then

erected a frame, of peg and mortise construction, upon cypress log-pillars. The makeshift carpenters then manufactured natural insulation for the walls, described below:

> Into the studding were placed pins, extending from one to the other, horizontally, and about ten inches apart. The long grey moss of the country was then gathered and thrown by layers into a pit dug for the purpose, with the soil until the pit was full, when water was added in sufficient quantities to wet the moss through; this done, all who are assisting in construction of the house--men, women, boys and girls--jump in upon it, and continue to tramp until mud and moss are completely intermingled . . . , when it is gathered together and made into rolls about two feet long.

Rolls of mud-and-moss insulation, called bousillage, were then laid over the pins, beginning with the lowest, and upon completion of the task, the facade and interior walls were smoothed by hand or shovel. The cypress shingle roof and cypress weather boards were then installed to protct the waddle from the elements. Only under the ubiquitous front gallery was the bousillage exposed to viev; a protective coating of whitevash was applied to the facade.

Upon completion, the Cajun house, which, among the petit habitants, remained a small, one-room, rectangular, raised structure, with a garçonnière, throughout the antebellum period and well into the postbellum era, was surrounded by a double pieux, or cypress post, fence. The outer fence enclosed both a barnyard and a small, square magasin of poteaux-en-terre construction which served the small farmer as a barn. A second, cypress picket fence surrounded the house, preventing hens from nesting beneath the structure. The one-room house was modestly furnished with cypress furniture. Though the walls were profusely decorated with religious pictures and commercial advertisements (to keep the wind from bloving through cracks between

the boards), the structure itself usually contained only one buffet, one table, four to six chairs, one armoire, one permanent bed, and several small, roll-away beds.

The tremendous amount of labor required to build, insulate, and furnish an antebellum home required the cooperation of several neighboring households. On the Acadian frontier, such assitance was readily given without expectation of financial compensation. Participation in a house-raising party, however, was not without compensation. One observer indicates that "copious refreshments and a heavy meal cooked on the spot by the womenfolk are the reward for their service."

The group cohesiveness manifested in Acadian "house raisings" also typified other Cajun social institutions, such as boucheries and bals de maison. By bringing together isolated frontiersmen for practical purposes, social events served the function of frequently reinforcing socio-cultural bonds between members of the Acadian community. Such reinforcement was necessary because fist-fights, particularly on election day, all too frequently marred the tranquility of the South Louisiana frontier. It is thus significant that rural settlers regularly participated in neighborhood folk dances, with neighbors sponsoring the gatherings on a rotating basis.

This high level of participation in the weekly dances is especially important because invitations were not issued on an individual basis. On the contrary, "a youth on his pony would take a small wand, and tie to its top end a red or white flag, and ride up and down the bayou, from the house where the ball was intended, for two or three miles;

returning, tied the wand . . . above the gate informing all--'This is the place .'" All neighboring settlers were welcome, and thus attendance was inevitably heavy. The participants, clad in their finest attire, consistently maintained their best behavior, and even Acadian detractors conceded that "nothing boisterous was ever known" at these Cajun house dances.

The primary function of the bal de maison was, of course, entertainment, but dances also served as a means of regularly utilizing, and thus preserving, the Acadians' traditional music, cuisine, dances, and language. Like the bal de maison , the boucherie , or rural butchery, served a dual role within Acadian society; as with the rural dances, sponsorship of the butchery was on a rotating basis, and all members of the Acadian community within a small geographic area participated. Though boucheries provided the participants with a continuous supply of fresh meat in an age without refrigeration, the regular meetings gave distant neighbors the opportunity to renew acquaintances and to exchange views, thereby periodically reinforcing the participants' sense of group identity. Acadian community spirit was also undergirded by frequent nocturnal visits, or veillées. In these visits, which were always held in the idle winter months after the evening meal, hosts and visitors divided themselves into groups by sex and ages. While men carved "wooden utensils, repaired their farm tools and made baskets," women manufactured thread, repaired torn clothing, and cared for the children who clustered around them. Though the conversation was inevitably dominated by males, the usual topic of

conversation was not politics or agriculture, but folk tales. As the fireplace cast flickering shadows across the one-room cabane, fathers recounted miraculous cures by local traiteurs (folk faith healers), or personal encounters with sabbats and feu-follets.

Though intended to relieve the monotony of frontier life during the idle and dreary winter months which were punctuated only by festive Christmas, New Year's Day, and Mardi Gras celebrations, veillées also served as the medium for preserving Acadian folk beliefs. Folkways and superstitions were not merely a conspicuous part of Cajun oral tradition; on the contrary, they constituted an integral part of everyday Acadian life. Poor crops or livestock epidemics were typically attributed to a sorcerer's spell. Omens also foretold good or ill fortune, while phases of the moon dictated the proper time for cutting hair, and religious feast days signalled the outset of the planting season. Finally, most petit habitants firmly believed in faith healing.

The most dominating institutions in Cajun "folk theology" were traiteurs and sorcerers. Combining elements of mysticism and Catholic dogma, traiteurs and sorcerers practiced a unique brand of folk medicine in the Acadian parishes. In rural areas, particularly in the southwestern Louisiana parishes, medical doctors were simply unavailable. Therefore, settlers stricken with illness turned out of necessity, as well as by choice, to the folk physician. Like their modern, college-trained counterparts in the health-care field, traiteurs specialized in various human and animal diseases, ranging in severity from warts to charbon (anthrax). The most commonly treated

maladies, however, were warts, toothache, earache, rheumatism, inflamations, tumors, and bleeding. In most instances, patients travelled to traiteurs' homes for treatment, but bedridden persons were treated either by proxy at the homes of the "most powerful" traiteurs or, more commonly, through "house calls." In treating an ill patient, the attending traiteur usually administered "holy water, wax and signs of the cross, mixed with secret prayers." These prayers, which consistently invoked the power of Nôtre Père of la Sainte Vierge, were the most powerful weapons in the traiteurs' medical arsenal, and, as the "divine gift of healing" was considered a sacred trust, the incantations were closely guarded secrets. Moreover, most traiteurs neither sought, nor accepted, payment or verbal remerciements from their patients. Though traiteurs frequently instructed their children--often of the opposite sex--in Acadian folk medicine, the intricacies of the extra-religious healing services were usually passed on to young men, both black and white, who sought private instruction in folk medicine; the apprentice traiteur were strictly enjoined to maintain a veil of secrecy around their mystical rituals.

Like traiteurs sorcerers invoked Divine Providence to relieve the pain of "severe arthritis, internal sicknesses, and sickness of the members." Unlike traiteurs, sorcerers mixed Catholic sacramentals and religious trappings, such as holy water, with medieval black magic. According to the "Anonymous Breaux Manuscript", these "wizards", after "arresting" the disease with magical incantations, prescribed novenas and plasters made with mysterious elements, such as May dew drops, which, though medically ineffective, frequently evoked psychosomatic benefits. Once

the patient's physical discomfort abated, Cajun sorcerers prepared a sachet or amulet containing spiders and frog and snake bones to be placed around the patient's neck for nine days to dislodge the evil spirit responsible for the illness.

Reliance upon folk healers and black magic did not in any way diminish Acadian devotion to the Catholic church. Traiteurs and sorcerers consistently were (and remain) devout Catholics and regular church-goers. Sacraments marking the three major milestones in life--birth, marriage, and death--were thus important events in Acadian folk life. The birth of a child, announced by gunshots, attracted all the local women to the new mother's house. Though such mutual aid programs were indeed significant social institutions, they were clearly overshadowed by the selection of godparents for the child's christening, for the practice formally allied families and thus reinforced group identity.

With stress constantly placed upon group solidarity within their community, lower class Acadians maintained a far greater sense of group identity, a far greater appreciation for their heritage, and a way of life far different from that of their more affluent cousins. The institution of compulsory education in the early twentieth century, however, would breach these formidable cultural walls and irrevocably alter the course of their culture's development.

LOUISIANA FRENCH FOLKLIFE

An Overview

Barry Jean Ancelet

For years, folklorists were primarily concerned with the performance traditions of people. They studied folktales and folk music. But it soon became clear that traditional culture went beyond oral tradition and music. It was not only a matter of folktales and fiddle tunes, but the cultural background which produced them as well, the context in which they thrived and the ethnicity which they reflected and transmitted. Traditional culture also includes artifacts and material culture like barns and baskets, ranching and religion, games and names. It is reflected in the very occupations and vocations of everyday life. The term folklife is thus used to refer to this broader description of tradition and community.

CREOLES AND CREOLIZATION

Historical Background (for a complete discussion of the history of the French presence in Louisiana, see Carl Brasseaux)

Louisiana is sometimes called the Creole State and Louisiana French folklife is, like most aspects of the French Louisiana, indeed the result of creolization. French settlers first began to arrive in Louisiana in the early eighteenth century. They first settled along the waterways, primarily the Mississippi River. They first interacted with the native American Indian tribes in the area. They eventually imported

slaves from Africa to work the large farms or plantations they developed there.

In the mid-eighteenth century, France transferred Louisiana to Spain. The Spanish gained administrative control of the colony and sent some settlers, but the established French population continued to dominate everyday life in the colony. Between 1765 and 1785, shortly after Spaintook possession, the Acadians arrived in Louisiana after being exiled from their homeland, now called Nova Scotia, by the British in 1755. German-speaking settlers also arrived from Alsace and Germany. English-speaking settlers arrived from England, Ireland, Scotland and the new United States. These varied peoples found themselves in a regional "melting pot" which blended these various ingredients into a gumbo called Creole culture.

In its broadest sense, <u>créole</u> meant simply "local, home-grown, not imported," and referred to people and things as well as ways of doing things. Thus there were French Creoles and Creole slaves, Creole horses and tomatoes, Creole language and architecture. The descendants of French immigrants born in the New World were called Creoles to distinguish them from the immigrants who continued to arrive from France.

Slaves born in Louisiana were called Creoles to distinguish them from blacks captured in Africa and brought to the colony by slave traders. Creole slaves were more valuable because they were acclimatized and acculturated; they were less likely to die from new diseases. They were more likely to speak the language of their masters. And they were born into slavery and were thus less likely to try to escape.

Creole agricultural products were home-grown and more likely to be fresh. Creole animals were bred and raised locally and were more likely adapted to the sub-tropical conditions. Cultural features like language, material culture and architecture, cuisine, music and oral tradition, and architecture were also creolized, that is, blended in the Louisiana melting pot and adapted to the environment. Essential to this process was improvisation and adaptation. Migration, whether voluntary or not, caused a break in ancestral patterns. The New World provided the opportunity to experiment. While individual cultures did preserve some old ways in the New World, the frontier environment also provided the opportunity for them to create new ways from the old. This was at the very heart of the creolization process in Louisiana.

Today this creolization process has become associated primarily with one of its most important proponents, the descendants of the Acadians who intermarried and interacted with most of the other ethnic groups in the area and eventually came to dominate the Louisiana French melting pot by sheer numbers. This cultural and ethnic hybrid is called Cajun.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A LOUISIANA SOCIETY

An important factor in developing a sense of ethnicity and cultural identity in the Louisiana French community was social gatherings. Cajuns have long had a strong sense of identity. See, for example, James Dormon's discussion of the development of social and cultural

identity among the Cajuns in The Cajuns: Essays on their History and Culture (Lafayette: University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1983), 233-251. Their ancestors were, in fact, one of the first groups of New World settlers to develop a sense of identity apart from that of the old country. Most of the people who eventually became the Acadians came in 1632 from an area about twenty miles around the town of Loudun on the border between the provinces of Poitou and Vendée in France. This helps to explain the strong sense of group they demonstrated very early in Acadia. Moreover, a new sense of identity and ethnicity was born in Acadia, the result of the frontier experience and a unique blending of those first French settlers, native American Indian tribes like the Micmac and Souriquois, and a small number of Catholic Irish and Scottish families. This blend produced the Acadians.

When the Acadians were exiled in 1755, they brought a strong and tenacious sense of themselves into exile with them. The work of historian Carl Brasseaux has shown clearly that those who eventually resettled in Louisiana between 1765 and 1785 had the clear intention of reestablishing their broken society in South Louisiana. Even those who had been repatriated to France volunteered to the King of Spain to help settle his newly acquired colony. There they encountered the French Creoles who had been in the colony since the Lemoine brothers, Iberville and Bienville, had planted the first permanent settlement in 1699 and had undergone a blending process of their own. They also encountered a new set of native American Indian tribes including the Houmas, the Chitimachas and remnants of the Attakapas, as well as Germans and Alsacians, Spanish, and later a few Anglo-Americans, Irish,

Scots and Italians. The blending process continued and eventually produced the Cajuns.

The descendants of slaves brought from Africa to work on the plantations primarily along the Mississippi River and bayous like the Teche and the Vermilion, were also creolized and affected by the Louisiana blending process. They learned to speak the French language of their masters and overseers, and eventually blended this new language with their own native languages to produce a language called Creole. They in turn interacted with their neighbors and contributed new ways of cooking, dancing and singing to the Louisiana blend. They adopted the Christian religion of the Europeans but adapted it to fit their own sense of spirituality.

SOCIALIZATION AND IDENTITY

On the prairies as well as along the bayous, life clustered in small pockets. Before such institutions as schools and churches, family and neighborhood gatherings provided socialization, communication and homemade entertainment in a variety of traditional settings, all of which helped to cement a strong sense of community spirit in these small group settings.

Boucheries

In addition to providing an efficient way of distributing fresh meat to participating families, boucheries also were an important part of the social life of many regions, providing a chance for friends and

relatives to get together on a regular basis. While they worked together, they also visited and talked. They found out who was doing what, who was seeing whom, who was hosting a house dance that weekend, who was ill and who had recovered, who needed help and who could give it, who was born and who died. As they laughed and gossiped, they also continuously reinforced their sense of community as they slaughtered the animal, cut, clean and divided the meat. They also made sausages and other by-products. Nothing was wasted. Gratons or cracklins were made of the skin. The internal organs were used in the sausages and boudin or cooked in a sauce piquante de débris or entrail stew. Meat was carefully removed from the head and congealed for fromage de tête de cochon (hog's head cheese). Brains were cooked in a delicate brown sauce. Even the intestines were cleaned and used for sausage and boudin casings. It is said that the only thing lost in a pig was the squeal. Boucheries also nutured a sense of community in the sense that the cooperative system on which they were based created a interdependence between members of a community which underscored their other social ties. Before the days of refrigeration, members of a community, usually already linked by family ties and other social factors, joined in a cooperative effort to provide all participating members with fresh meat on a regular basis. Boucheries depended on the agreement between members of the cooperative to take turns providing a pig or calf or cow, according to the nature of the agreement. Sometimes animals were slaughtered collectively, with at least one representative of each family present to help. Other times, one family's share in the cooperative was the work. They slaughtered and prepared the meat for

members of the other families to pick up on a regular basis. Since fresh meat usually could be preserved only a few days, many *boucheries* operated on a weekly basis. The size of the cooperative group was limited to a number which could be adequately served by the animals involved. *Boucheries de grosses bêtes*, or beef cooperatives had more available meat than *boucheries de petites bêtes*, usually pork and sheep cooperatives, and thus involved more families.

In any case, the society depended on faithful participation in the system. A break in the chain could throw the entire system off track. In times of trouble, the cooperative covered for ailing or distressed members. But able members were expected to carry their load. This interdependence underscored the sense of common indentity in many communities.

Coups de main

There were other cooperative working efforts called *coups de main* to assist those in need of help. These were something like assistance insurance. If someone was too ill to pick his cotton or corn one year, his neighbors and family gathered at his house for a *ramassèrie*, usually picking his entire field in a single day. If someone needed a new well or a new wing on his barn, folks gathered and pitched in. Later, he would do the same for someone else. These *coups de main* helped to strengthen the social fabric by establishing and perpetuating mutual interdependences. With social security, health insurance, workmen's compensation, and the general trappings of a money-based economy make these *coups de main* less crucial to survival today, they

remain an important part of the social structure. Someone who is adding a wing onto his house himself can expect help from his circle of friends and family. When someone else in the circle needs to build a boat shed, he too can expect that the favor will be reciprocated. There is a strong code of honor involved in these cooperative efforts. Someone who is asked to participate in a coup de main will usually arrange to go, even at great inconvenience, in order to preserve one's place in the system.

Meals

Not all socializing was work-related. Meals, for example, have long been a pivotal point of Cajun and Creole society, achieving much more importance than simple nutrition. It is often said of the Louisiana French that they do not eat to live, but live to eat. Cooking is a highly cultivated art. Weather and season are factors only in determining what kind of social event meals will be. There are outdoor crawfish, crab and shrimp boils in the spring and summer, and indoor gumbos in the wintertime. Generally, women cooked in the kitchen and men cooked outdoors. There were cases when men invaded the kitchen, but very rarely did women cook outdoors.

In addition to the meal, cooking itself was a social event. Cooking was considered a performance and invited guests often gathered around the kitchen stove or around the barbecue pit or butane burner to observe the cooking process and comment on it. Participants could also be pressed into service by the head cook to do support tasks (cutting onions, washing crawfish...) All the while, the cooperative and performance aspects of the cooking process provided an opportunity for

socialization (exchanging news, discussing issues of mutual interest...) and social performance (telling jokes, singing songs...). Large indoor or outdoor affairs were frequently accompanied by informal performances (music, stories...).

Meals, like coups de mains and other cooperative social functions, often involved a circle of participants which exchanged invitations. Sometimes these circles were large enough to require eating in shifts. Often, in this case, tables were discriminated by sex. Women ate together and men ate together, giving each group a chance to engage in conversation which may have been uninteresting to members of the opposite sex or inappropriate to a mixed group.

Dance halls

One of the most important socializing factors in Cajun culture was music and dancing. Even as they were suffering the trauma of exile and abject poverty, the Acadians who arrived in Saint Domingue in 1764 organized a dance immediately after a communal wedding and baptism blessing ceremony (see Saltoris' letter to his Intendant, quoted in Gabriel Debien's "The Acadians in Santo Domingo," in The Cajuns , 46). An early nineteenth-century travelogue describes the Cajuns similarly: "They all danced to a fast step, old and young alike..." In addition to being a place for the community to meet, dances also provided a place for another important social function: courtship. Young girls and boys began interacting on the level of young adults when they began attending dances, usually under the supervision of their parents, grandparents or older siblings. In some public dance

halls, young boys were not allowed to roam freely. They were sometimes required to remain in a separate place, called *la cage aux chiens*, unless they were dancing or arranging for a dance. As often occurs in places where courtship is at stake, dance halls were not infrequently the scene of fights and sometimes cruel practical jokes. Many dance hall owners hired constables or special watchmen to keep the peace.

Before public dance halls, dances called *bals de maison* were often held in private homes. Families cleared the largest room in their homes of furniture and spread the word that there would be a dance on a designated night. Even after the development of public *salles*, families continued to host *bals de maison*. Because attendance at house dances was usually by invitation only, these tended to be somewhat safer than public dance halls, but many house dances were also broken up by invading hoodlums and competing suiters as well. Musicians who were not ready for public performance first honed their skills at these *bals de maison*.

Veillées

Another important social gathering on a smaller scale was the traditional *veillée*, when families and friends got together for a visit in the evening. These visits were usually after supper and often included coffee, dessert, and lots of talking. Storytelling sessions were popular forms of entertainment at these *veillées*. After a few fairy tales or animal tales, the children were sent to bed and the session continued in a more adult vein with jokes and tall tales. Radio

and later television sometimes transformed these veillées , but did not entirely eliminate them, replacing the storytellers, but not the visits.

OTHER FAMILY GATHERINGS

Extended family gatherings on occasions like religious holidays, birthdays, weddings and funerals also provided opportunities for socialization. Christmas, New Year's Day, and Easter were the most popular family gathering days.

Weddings

Weddings were often a large affair which drew two extended families together in a ritual which was usually accompanied by music. Though honeymoon trips are a relatively recent development, wedding receptions and dances are well-rooted in the cultural history of the Cajuns. Wedding receptions were usually well-stocked with homemade cakes and other food. Wedding dances were accompanied by a variety of traditions. Prominent among these was the wedding march in which the bride and groom walked around the dance floor to the tune of the traditional marche des mariés , with their parents, grandparents, godparents, brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles following in a train of pairs. Afterwards, the newlyweds danced a waltz and invited the party to join them, which officially launched the wedding dance. Other traditions associated with wedding dances include requiring older unmarried siblings to dance barefoot, often in a tub, at the reception or wedding

dance, and contributing money to the new household by pinning money to the bride's veil in exchange for a dance with her.

Funerals

Death also provided an occasion for socializing. Wakes were first held in the home of the deceased. The body was dressed and laid out in one room of the house. Family and friends paid their respects and then met in the other rooms to talk about the affairs of life: who was planting what, who was seeing whom, who was having trouble, who might be next to go... Joke telling sessions invariably occured in one of the back rooms during these otherwise somber wakes. Families of the deceased were also expected to feed the visitors. Consequently it was expected that visitors bring a little something to contribute to the pot. Even once funeral homes began to displace wakes from private homes, many of these folklife practices endured. A kitchen is a basic requirement in South Louisiana funeral homes, and storytelling sessions continue to thrive in the corners of the lounges and waiting rooms.

OCCUPATIONS AND LIFE CRAFTS

Activities that were primarily traditional occupations and life crafts for earlier generations are now often preserved as folklife preoccupations and hobbies. The most important of these fishing, hunting, trapping, cattle ranching, farming, building, blacksmithing, and basketmaking.

Farming

When the French settlers arrived in Acadia, they were above all farmers and set about doing the kind of work they knew how to do, but they quickly realized that they would need help to discover what would grow best in this unfamiliar land and climate. Native American Indian tribes like the Micmac and Souriquois showed the Acadians how to grow corn and potatos and other native American crops. They also learned what native wild foods, like mushrooms and berries were edible. Before long the Acadians were cultivating prosperous farms in natural clearings or basins like the Minas, Grand Pré, Beaubassin and the area around Port Royal. Within a few generations when there began to be a shortage of farmland, they developed a remarkable system of dikes to reclaim low lands along the coast. After the exile, they discovered that many of the techniques they had developed for farming in Acadia would not work in sub-tropical Louisiana. They once again learned from their neighbors. Local American Indians, like the Chitimachas and Houmas, taught them about native edible foods and how to cultivate yams. Later they learned from the French and black Creoles to grow cotton, sugar cane and okra. From Anglo-Americans they eventually learned to grow rice and soybeans. Most Cajuns cultivated small self-sufficient farms growing a wide variety of vegetables and livestock. They ate what they produced, yet carefully established and maintained family and neighborhood cooperatives to assure a safety net in case of a bad season. Bartering was a common way of evening the variety of foods available to a family. An overabundance of potatoes

might be traded for cane syrup or some other commodity. Some crops served a variety of purposes and nothing was wasted. Corn, for example, was cooked fresh, ground into corn meal, and dried as grain for the cows, horses and mules. The shucks were used to feed the cows and the corncobs were used to increase the heat of fires under cooking kettles.

There are still many Cajuns and Creoles who make their living on the farm. There are also many who have turned to other more commercial or industrial occupations, but who preserve an attachment to the land by growing a garden in their backyards or on family land where they spend their weekends and free afternoons. Many of these cultivate extended plots which are difficult to call gardens and produce much more than their families can eat or even conserve, and they distribute this overflow of food to their extended families and friends reducing their dependance on store-bought goods.

Ranching

The Cajuns and Creoles were among the first cowboys in America, participating in some of the earliest cattle drives in this country. Those who settled the southwestern prairies were part of the great American West. They became excellent riders and ropers, doggers and drivers. Towns on the southwestern prairies of Louisiana bear the traces of their origins as cattle towns. Older store fronts look like the facades on a western movie set. Cement sidewalks have only recently replaced wooden plank ones called banquettes. Hitching posts can still be seen along the main streets in the older parts of many of these

towns. There is still a great respect for horses and horsmanship. There are still a few craftsmen like Boo LeDoux and Noah Comeaux who make saddles, whips, cabrèsses (horsehair ropes), and other western tack for this tradition.

Neighborhood horse shows provide an outlet for demonstrating the skills which were once necessary to make a living out on the range. Trail rides still cut through the prairies. Times change, but traditions adapt to them. Now trail riders must first secure a permit from the local sheriff, but the sheriff or state police still maintains an active mounted posse and can arrange to escort such events on horseback. There are still a few ranchers who let their cattle graze freely, especially in the marshlands along the coast, and round them up annually to count, brand, and sell them.

From blacksmiths and farriers to metalworkers and mechanics

There are still a good number of active blacksmiths and farriers, also an important part of life with horses, though some specialized skills have faded into disuse. Shoeing, for example, is still part of the active repertoire, while banding wagon wheels is extremely rare. Many blacksmiths have transferred their skills and knowledge of metalworking to produce industrial equipment with the addition of welding to their skills. Others, like the Guidry's of Lafayette, produce ornamental metalworks like wrought iron chairs and barbecue pits. Some, like Mr. Champagne of Rayne, who might have been smiths in another time have opened tool shops or sheetmetal shops instead; others have followed the progression of transportation from horse to

automobile to become mechanics. Pierre Montoucet, for example, was a well-known 19th century blacksmith who provided some of the delicate ironwork for the church at Grand Coteau. His son Jacques was a blacksmith and farrier until he found a set of tools in a drainage ditch along Highway 90 (the Old Spanish Trail). His son Don now owns and operates a successful garage and body shop near that same highway in Scott. Don has also translated his family smithing skills into contemporary terms. He is a skilled welder and iron worker. He has fabricated a wide range of things from boats to barns, triangles to trailers, out of metals. A shed on the side of his garage is an excellent example of his adaptive skills; it is made of salvaged road sign posts and used roofing tin.

Fishing

Eventually some of these settlers became fishermen to supplement their food supply and income from their principal occupation, but they had to learn all about it from scratch. There were a few maritime types who had come from Bretagne, Normandy and the area around La Rochelle in France who primed the pump and soon the Acadians developed sea legs of their own and fished for cod, haddock, lobster, clams, and scallops in the cold Atlantic along the coast of Canada. When they resettled in Louisiana, however, the Acadians had to relearn fishing techniques appropriate for catching speckled trout, redfish, shrimp, crab and oysters in the inland waters along marshy coast of the Gulf of Mexico, and bass, perch, catfish, crawfish. What began as an avocation to supplement farming developed for many into a principal occupation and for others a principal hobby.

It has been said that an example of success among Cajuns is the two-trailer family, with one for the horse and the other for the boat. Commercial fishermen catching non-game fish share the Atchafalaya Basin and the lakes and bayous of South Louisiana with sports anglers fishing for patassa (bream or sunperch), sacalait (crappie or white perch), perche (bass), and other game fish. Some fish with wire loops for poissons d'armée (alligator gar). Some run trot lines to catch barbue (channel catfish), machouaron (yellow catfish), and goujon (spotted catfish). In the brackish lakes along the coast and in the bays and Gulf, commercial and sports fishermen catch fish like redfish, speckled trout, catfish, snapper, and flounder. (The names of some salt water fish are less generally well-known than the fresh and coastal water fish, perhaps an indication of the relatively recent development of deep sea fishing in the gulf.) Commercial trawlers are regularly joined in the bays and inland waters by smaller private boats catching shrimp and crabs for family, friends and freezer. Individuals gather oysters in public beds along with oystermen working to supply restaurants and stores. In the bayous and rice canals, some fishermen preserve an ancient art catching large catfish and turtles by hand in underwater holes along the banks. At night froggers work the banks of bayous, ponds and drainage ditches, catching bullfrogs by hand and with mechanical gigs.

Hunting

In their Canadian homeland, hunting for the Acadians had been a means to supplement their supply of fresh meat. They had learned from the native American tribes to hunt a variety of game, including turkey,

pheasant, moose, deer and elk. In Louisiana, the Cajuns had to relearn hunting techniques for the sub-tropics. Because of contemporary laws banning commercial hunting, this activity has remained an avocation, but a very popular one. Louisiana is located on the southern end of one of the world's major flyways providing an abundance of migratory birds like dove, woodcock, and a wide variety of ducks. There is also an ample supply of native small game like quail, rabbit and squirrel. For those interested in larger game, there is primarily deer, though there are some bears in the woods and the basin. There is a wide range of the traditions handed down from generation to generation which are associated with hunting, including how to build blinds, how to call game (ducks, quail, turkeys...), and how to handle packs of hunting dogs. People who hunt together over a long period of time also may develop a language all their own, with colorful references to game and activities, as well as an active stock of stories about great hunts and poor hunts, narrow escapes and techniques for escaping from town, wife or boss.

Camplore

The need to get far away from civilization for both hunting and fishing has spawned a considerable amount of camps. Some are located in the Atchafalaya Basin or along the numerous bayous which meander through South Louisiana. Others are in the salt water marshes along the coast. Still others are in the pine and oak forests which abound in the

region. Some of these are elaborate cooperative efforts, while others are modest family affairs. Some are usually reserved for men only. Others welcome the entire family. The need for organization and improvised entertainment while ostensibly away from civilization generates a considerable amount of traditions which fall under folklife. Work crews are formed before the season to prepare the camps. Privileges are often accorded to the membership according to activity in the preparation and maintenance of the camp. Hunters and fishermen play cards, tell stories and sing songs to while away the evenings. Certain members are appointed to clean game and fish, to cook, and to clean up. (See Huval research paper)

Moss picking

Until a few decades ago, moss picking was a popular occupation among unskilled laborers who knew the swamps and forests of South Louisiana. The spanish moss which hangs from many trees was once used to stuff the seats of buggies and early automobiles. Cajuns and Creoles alike used to travel through the wetlands filling flat bottom boats with green moss. They would take their loads of moss to one of the many moss gins which dotted the edge of the swamps. With the development and refinement of springs and synthetic materials, these moss gins gradually disappeared. The last one in operation is near Labadieville, on the east side of the Atchafalaya Basin. Hobbyists still gather and dry some moss to stuff locally made dolls and other toys.

Boat building

Boats were a necessary part of travel in the swamps and bayous. Consequently, boat building was a functional part of life for the wetlands Cajuns. They adapted boat styles from their native France and Acadia, and learned new techniques for making a wide variety of boats, from the pirogues and bateaux needed to travel in the shallow waters of the swamps, to the larger skiffs needed to navigate the sometimes turbulent coastal waters along the Gulf of Mexico, to the still larger shrimp boats needed to go out into the gulf. Specialty boats were developed for certain occupations. Moss-picking boats and oystering boats were fitted to carry their respective loads. Some families maintained travelling boats as well as work boats. Some boats were poled; others were paddled; still others were sometimes propelled by sail, sometimes pulled by haulers on the banks. Later motorized one-cylinder joe boats were designed to withstand the strain of going through the hyacinths of the fresh water swamps and grasses of the salt water marshes. With the development of shipping and especially the offshore oil industry, boat-building became big business. Companies began manufacturing tugboats and tankers, as well as oil drilling platforms.

Cypress was once plentiful and made excellent boat-building material, because it expanded when wet, closing most building imperfections. With the decimation of the virgin cypress forests, many boat-builders turned to recently developed materials like marine plywood and later aluminum, steel and fiberglass. These more modern materials are often used in designs based on earlier styles, like the aluminum flatbottom bateau and the fiberglass pirogue. Some of these

styles were adapted to accomodate new needs for speed and style among sportsfishermen, like the Cajun Bass Boats. (See section on boat building by Glen Pitre.)

Instrument making

Just as Cajun and Creole music are the result of the unique blend of cultural ingredients found in South Louisiana, the instruments used to produce this music are also the result of an ecclectic collection of influences. Traditional instrumentation in Cajun and Creole bands includes French fiddles, German accordions, Spanish guitars, and a rich array of percussion instruments, including triangles, scrubboards and spoons, which share European and Afro-Caribbean origins. Although most of these instruments were originally imported from manufactured sources, some were eventually made in Louisiana by craftsmen who acquired these skills from immigrants, as was usually the case with fiddle makers, or by simple studying the imported models, as was generally the case with Accordion makers. Often percussion instruments were originally improvised from household materials, like spoons or washboards, and later refined into a form which was only usuable as an instrument. When electrical amplification became available, many bands improvised their own systems from radio parts hooked up to a speaker on one end and a crystal microphone on the other, the whole operation being powered as often as not by a generator mounted on an idling automobile parked outside the building. Perhaps the most popular instrument to come out of this new age was the electric steel guitar, an electrically amplified modification of the accoustic dobro. Many of

these were modified by the players themselves. (See article on instrument making in this report.)

Life Crafts

One of the most important and most visible life crafts in the Cajun tradition has been weaving. In the days before the general availability of pre-fabricated material, communities produced their own. The Cajuns learned to grow, harvest, card, spin and weave cotton in Louisiana, and made their own clothing and other household items like tablecloths, washcloths, rugs, sheets and blankets. One of the distinctive elements of Acadian weaving tradition involved the use of naturally brown cotton and wool dyed with natural substances like indigo and berries for decorative purposes. (See Robert Smith's report on Acadian weaving.) While working for the LSU extention services during the 1930s, Louise Olivier organized groups of Acadian women to revive traditional skills and market them. This effort developed a group of weavers, some of whom are still alive and active today (e.g., Gladys Clark, of Judice). The weaving of dried leaves and grasses is also found in Louisiana French tradition. Native Louisiana Indians, such as the Houma and Chitimacha, and later arrivals, such as the Coushatta (Koasati), make beautiful baskets, often in the shapes of animals, from dried straw and grasses, or pine needles. Ada Thomas has received a National Heritage Award for her role in preserving her heritage and in inspiring young members of her community to learn this traditional skill. There has been a reneval of interest in weaving among native Louisiana Indians. Cajuns learned to make fine hats, fans

and other accessories from dried leaves from their native American neighbors, but this tradition has rapidly eroded in recent years. Elvina Kidder is one of the last of the Cajun palmetto weavers.

Devolution vs transformation of tradition

Some folklorists tend to view change as a problem. Yet, left to their own, traditional cultures are constantly in the process of changing. This is not necessarily a sign of decay, as antiquarianists contend, but a sign of life instead. In order to survive and grow in a contemporary context, tradition must shed its dead branches and grow new ones. If tradition is viewed as a process instead of a product, then this necessary change can also be traditional if it conforms to its own rules. Trying to restrict the natural, organic growth of a traditional culture may be like trying to pin it to the wall, thus contributing to its demise, instead of watching it fly around on its own.

One example of this is the music and dance of the Cajuns and Creoles. While it is undeniably true that some of the variety of steps, like the reels and quadrilles, contredanses and mazurkas, were lost in this century, it is also true that new steps have been developed within the tradition which include more individually expressive styles like the Cajun version of the jitterbug and the new Cajun shuffle. Musicians have also adapted to changes, electrifying their music and experimenting with new instrumentation, like saxophones and pianos, and styles, like rock and country. In addition to the traditional dance hall and house dance settings, they now also play in festivals and in the schools, on radio and television.

The loss of long magic tales and animal tales has also been lamented by folklorists who have studied Louisiana French oral tradition, yet there is a remarkable persistence of oral tradition among the Cajuns and Creoles despite the grim predictions of its imminent disappearance. Storytelling has been described as a dying art in South Louisiana for decades. Yet there is still a tremendous love of talking and storytelling in this culture. Stories have not faded from the scene. Instead there has been a transformation of oral tradition to accomodate shorter forms, like jokes and tall tales, which can survive the pace of modern times.

There is a parallel development in the adaptation of traditional folklife in the contemporary world, including the combination of traditional occupations with modern salaried employment. The 7/7 or 14/14 schedules of most roughnecks and deck hands make it possible for them to continue pursuing traditional occupations like trapping and fishing. Traditional occupations also have adapted to accomodate modern conveniences. Many crawfishermen now run their traps in boats with special motors, like "go-devils" which have been designed to run in very shallow water. The crawfishing season has also been stretched to start in November and run until May by the development of ponds based on highly sophisticated scientific research.

BELIEFS and FOLK RELIGION

It is important to remember that the word superstition has a negative connotation and should be avoided. A superstition is someone else's belief viewed from the outside. Cajuns and Creoles have a rich

stock of legends and beliefs. Most of these come from France and Africa, though most of these were adapted to the South Louisiana context. Some were developed in South Louisiana in response to more recent phenomena.

Legends

Traditional bogeymen, used to frighten children, include Madame Grands-doigts, who is said to come at night to pull the toes of naughty children with her long, bony fingers, and la tataille , the beast who is said to come to take naughty children away and even eat them up. Creoles tell of cauchemar, which rides people in their sleep causing them to feel suffocated and distressed, and of gris-gris, evil spirits or spells cast on one person by another. These are in addition to a wide variety of idiosyncratic bogeymen developed by individual families, like baboons and racoons, cows and cats, bulls and bears.

Cajuns also tell of feux follets, a Louisiana French version of will o'the wisps or foxfire, floating lights which caused observers to get lost in the woods or open prairie at night. Feux follets are said to be the wandering souls of unbaptized babies who lure travelers away from roads in the dark and cause them to become lost. It is said that one way to avoid their influence is to open a three-bladed knife and stick it into a post or tree. The feu follet will then become attracted to its own reflection in the blades, allowing the person to escape.

In Quebec, the sound of thunder is called la chasse galerie, said to be the shouting of damned lumberjacks who sold their souls to the devil in exchange for the right to return from the woods to visit their girlfriends in town. The Louisiana chasse galerie resembles instead the French version of the legend which describes thunder as the crying of wild huntsmen who were damned for hunting on Sunday. The loup garou, Louisiana version of the werewolf, does not need to be shot with a silver bullet to be killed as in Europe. In some tellings, he needs only to be made to bleed to be transformed back into human form. There are also other garou forms like hibou garou (man transformed into owl), chien garou (man into dog), and chat garou (man into cat).

Other legends and beliefs include stories about God walking on earth, unrepentant men rooted to the ground, and babies' veils (membranes) announcing special, psychic powers.

Weather Prediction

Many farmers believed in the ability to predict the weather by observing signs in nature. Some of these signs have no immediately demonstrable physiological connection with the predicted weather. For example, when the points of a crescent moon are up, it is suppposed to be dry for a week. A halo of light around a full moon supposedly means clear weather for a number of days equal to number of stars visible inside the ring. Other signs have a relatively plausible connection to the weather. The flocking of blackbirds, for example, is considered a sign of a coming cold snap. If cows lay down under a threatening sky,

this is a sign that it will indeed rain; conversely, if they do not, this is a sign that it will not rain, or rain only a light shower.

Folk medicine

Long ago, there was not always a doctor at hand to cure ills and injuries. People took care of themselves and their neighbors as best they could. Over the centuries, they developed cures for most common ailments. There is a continuum of curing practices ranging from herbal remedies to traiteurs. In herbal remedies, there is at least an ostensible causal relationship between the use of plants and other materials and the cure which is sought, as in the case of certain leaves which are steeped in cold water to make a tea which relieves the pain of indigestion. Modern science has shown that some of these herbs and plants contain natural forms of drugs which are used by doctors today. Some where toward the middle of the spectrum, there are the cures which involve physical materials, but in which there is no clearly demonstrable causal relationship between remedy and cure, as in the case of the advice to urinate on a hot rock to cure indigestion.

On the opposite end of this spectrum, there is faith healing, called in South Louisiana traitment, which seeks to cure ailments by means only of spoken incantations or prayers. Certain individuals, called traiteurs , are said to be blessed with the power or knowledge to cure certain maladies. This tradition is the result of an overlapping of cultural influences, from the "sorcerers" and "witches" of pre-Christian western French tradition to the "witch doctors" of

African tradition to the "medicine men" of American Indian tradition. All these claimed to affect nature with only spells or incantations. With the arrival of Christian tradition, these incantations became prayers and acquired quasi-religious trappings. A traiteur may, for example, attempt to cure indigestion by making the sign of the cross on the stomach of the ailing person and saying a prayer from the Bible. (For an analysis of folk medicine and faith healing, and a wide range of examples, see John Lancon's honors thesis on folk medecine in south Louisiana.)

FOLK RELIGION

Barry Jean Ancelet

Folklore is knowledge that is passed along from one person to another or from one generation to another through traditional, non-official channels. In this respect, folk religion includes beliefs and practices which are not sanctioned by Rome, but which have become an integral part of the religious lives of a people by custom. This includes such widely-known practices as the giving of gifts on Christmas and New Year's Day, as well as more culture specific practices such as the immensely popular latin-based celebration of Mardi Gras on the day before the Lenten season, the making of king's cakes during the epiphany up to Mardi Gras, and even more obscure practices such as the special commemoration celebration of certain saints' feastdays, like the making of bread altars for St. Joseph's Day, principally among the Italians of New Orleans, or the whitening and decorating of tombs for La Toussaint or All Saint's Day.

Often there is considerable overlap between nature beliefs and folk religion. Even within the Catholic Church, Christmas Day was originally determined by the former Winter soltice and Easter is determined annually by the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring equinox. It is perhaps a consequence of the ritual importance of the Spring and a period of rebirth that a number of traditional activities can be found during this time of the year. The huge bonfires mark the New Year in some of the Mississippi River parishes are in a direct line from the bonfires lit by ancient civilizations to encourage and reinforce the sun in its weakest moment (the Winter solstice).

Epiphany is announced by the making of king's cakes in which a bean is hidden. The one who gets the piece with the bean is chosen king for the day. Mardi Gras is a complex ritual with origins in ancient societies as well as medieval times (see Mardi Gras paper). Another example of this phenomenon is the tradition of St. Médard's Day, on which if it rains, it is said to rain for the next 40 days.

The relative lack of traditional religious activity during the summer and fall may be related to the concentration of work effort needed to plant and harvest crops. There are, however, a few folk religious practices directly associated with farming and fishing. Each year, priests go out into the fields, in places like New Iberia and Jeanerette, to bless the sugar cane and out to the edges of the bayous, in places like Delcambre and Morgan City, to bless the shrimping fleets by saying prayers over them and sprinkling them with holy water.

Also included in folk religion are personal or family observances of religion, such as the building and maintenance of home altars in Cajun and Creole households. These home altars serve not only as prayer places, but also as temples to commemorate family members who have passed away, with illustrated holy cards and death announcements, and tokens like watches, rings, scapulars, rosaries, and prayer books. These home shrines are often lovingly kept with fresh flowers and other decorations.

Another popular kind of folk religious observance among Cajuns and Creoles alike is lawn statuary. Many Cajun families pay their respects to their patron saint, usually Our Lady of the Assumption, with.

homemade grottos or shrines which house statues of the Virgin. (The Cajuns' traditional reverence for the Virgin Mary may not be such a coincidence, since the principal dieties in much of pre-Christian Europe were women. See, for example, Julia Landry's study of Celtic influences in Cajun tradition.) Other popular statues include the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and Saint Theresa (often confused with the Blessed Virgin) Some of these shrines simply expose the statues all alone. Others nestle the statues in natural havens, like porches, carports or under trees. Still others can be quite remarkable, including complex brick or cement grottos and elaborate landscaping, including small ponds and flowering bushes.

Because of the predominance of the Roman Catholic church among the Cajuns and Creoles, there are religious rituals which surround the major steps in a person's life, including birth, courtship and marriage, and death. Children are almost invariably baptized Catholic, and this within the first few months of their lives. The business of godfathering and godmothering is still very important in Cajun country. Almost always referred to by their French names, even by non-French-speaking youth, parrains and marrains are not only spiritual guides and insurance in case of the loss of both parents. They become family. They enlarge the circle of people who like you just because. They are gift givers at Christmas time and on birthdays. They are also the ones children might run to in case of trouble at home. A typical statement concerning godparents can go something like this: "Well, my dad can't go to the lake this weekend, so my parrain is taking me." Consequently, there has long been a great deal of importance given to

choosing these representatives. One commonly held tradition is that one cannot request this honor. There is, thus, a great deal of lobbying and jockeying for position which goes on behind the scenes as soon as a woman becomes pregnant, and sometimes even before.

Courtship and marriage were usually a matter for teenagers, traditionally. Sexual mores were strictly governed by the church law and mothers. Young ladies were almost always escorted to places of courtship, like dance halls, by their parents or at least by an older brother or uncle, who diligently surveyed the maiden's honor. Young boys with serious intentions had to make official visits to the family home, usually on Sunday afternoon, to negotiate with the young lady's father. Couples were almost never left alone until well into their courtship, and even then, only in an obvious safe situation like on the front porch swing. Much of this has now changed and young Cajuns date just like couples in most parts of America.

Long ago, a girl who reached the age of twenty without marrying was considered une vieille fille, an old maid. Marriages were performed according the rules of the Catholic church. For example, wedding banns, or announcements, had to be published three times before a ceremony was allowed.

Death involved another set of religious rituals. Long ago, most families waked their dead in the home. Nowadays, most use funeral homes. Yet there are a few durable traditions no matter where the body is exposed. Food is provided to visitors and it is customary to bring a contribution for the table. Every funeral has a kitchen in which food is kept hot and made available to visitors. Traditionally, bodies were

waked non-stop through the night for several days, which required special arrangements so that the body was never alone, even in the middle of the night. Recently, funeral homes have begun closing at 10 PM or midnight, easing the strain on survivors, but upsetting many who are disturbed that their loved ones are left alone. Some families continue to insist on staying all night. At certain intervals during the wake, the rosary is recited for the departed. Certain members of the community, in addition to the priests and members of the lay clergy, become known as leaders of rosary, primarily for their ability to deliver the mysteries and the special marker prayers which occur between decades and at the beginning and end of the rosary.

Another aspect of folk religion includes the relationship between religion and everyday life. This ranges from beliefs like that the Virgin will slap children who whistle at the dinner table to attitudes concerning clergy (see paper on anticlerical humor). Another common belief of this sort is that it is forbidden to break ground on Good Friday, and that if one does, one will see the blood of Jesus Christ. Conversely it is also held that Good Friday is the best day for planting parsley. This combination of beliefs caused many a gardener to plan ahead for the preparing and planting of his parley patch. Many Cajun families went to church on Palm Sunday to receive blessed palm leaves and holy water which they kept in their houses to spread during storms.

Praying is considered an important part of life and prayer is thought of as a means of intercession with which one can change the course of life. Some persons, not necessarily appointed by the church,

are thought to have a particularly good relationship with God and are frequently asked by others to help in obtaining favors from Him. These people thus become mediators between the Deity and His people, much in the same way that their ancestors used appointed prophets and high priests.

Traditional observances like the eating of seafood on Fridays and during the Lenten season provides another example of the relationship between religion and everyday life. Fish markets gear up to provide for a heavier demand on days historically set aside for fasting, despite the fact that the Catholic Church has officially eased its rules in this matter. Even many public school cafeterias continue to provide alternatives to meat for the predominately Catholic student body on Ash Wednesday and Fridays during Lent. Waitresses in restaurants will often gently remind patrons of the day, especially on special days like Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, if they choose a meat entree, just in case they may have forgotten.

Like the Mardi Gras celebration, which signals the beginning of Lent, Good Friday, which signals its approaching end, is celebrated with a ceremonial procession on the road between Catahoula and St. Martinville. Usually mounted on the walls of a church, the stations of this Way of the Cross are mounted on the largest oak trees between the two towns. Members of the faithful gather in St. Martinville and walk or drive the length of the road to Catahoula (about eight miles), stopping at each station to pray. Easter has traditionally been a time of family gatherings. Now many Cajun families have learned. features of the celebration from the American marketplace, like the

giving of baskets of dyed eggs and chocolate bunnies. Traditionally, however, eggs were not given, but prepared for a contest called pacquer, after the French name for Easter, Pacques. Participants boiled and dyed their eggs and brought along on visits to friends and relatives where they would pit them against other eggs to see which was the strongest, that is, which resisted breaking when struck against another egg. The winner was allowed to take the loser's broken egg as a prize. This meant that the winners had more to eat than the losers and there was much competition in these quests for the strongest eggs. This, along with a natural love of practical joking, led many to dye smallish goose eggs or largish guinea hen eggs (both renown for their tough shells) and even rocks in an attempt to stack the odds. Others distributed dyed, but uncooked eggs to grateful, but unsuspecting friends to watch their faces when they encountered the inevitably messy results of the competition.

Perhaps the important element of this tradition was the visiting and socialization it made possible. This tradition is still very popular among many Cajun families today. Extended families and friends take advantage of the Spring holiday to get together, not only for a little egg pacquing, but also for a crawfish boil or a barbecue as well. Many of the usual rites of spring are also observed: baseball, volleyball, kite flying, fishing, sleeping outside. Easter is, in many ways, a day on which the inevitable summer is claimed.

Christmas is the other major religious holiday celebrated by the Cajuns. Now, they buy Christmas trees and exchange battery-operated presents like in most parts of the western world. Cajun children now

eagerly await the arrival of Santa Claus. Traditionally they awaited the arrival of le Père Noel, or Father Christmas and received small, often handmade presents. In fact, traditionally, Christmas was more important as a time for family gatherings, family meals and going together to church for mass, often at midnight, than it was a time for the exchange of gifts. Although some did occur on Christmas Day, the major gift exchanging holiday in many families was New Year's Day. On this day, families and friends gathered and exchanged gifts called étrennes.

MARDI GRAS

Barry Jean Ancelet

Though not "sanctioned" by Rome, Mardi Gras is a popular traditional festival in many parts of the world, occuring on the last day before the beginning of the Lenten season. Mardi Gras, also called Carnaval, has roots in ancient Spring rituals and in medieval European adaptations of these older rituals. Survivals of these characteristics are still evident in contemporary celebrations of the Mardi Gras.

A key element of the Mardi Gras involves its roots in ancient springtime fertility rituals. These often functioned as a rite of passage for boys and girls by allowing them to act as men and women. This was sometimes accomplished by performing arduous tasks associated with manhood or womanhood, often involving surviving alone. It was sometimes of a more explicit sexual nature. This aspect of the celebration can still be clearly seen in such manifestations as the Rio de Janeiro carnaval, long based on the pursuit and realization of erotic fantasies. Even in the comparatively tame New Orleans Mardi Gras, one can see women baring their breasts for the crowds from their French quarter balconies. Additionally the whip, part fertility symbol associated with such rituals since ancient civilizations and part instrument of intimidation, is frequently encountered in symbolic form during Mardi Gras celebrations. The black Mardi Gras streetwalkers in Lafayette, for example, often carry crepe paper whips. A remarkable survival of this fertility symbolism can be found in the women's Mardi Gras at Petit Mamou near Basile, where women collect ingredients for a communal gumbo just like the men. After the ride, however, the women

sit on the floor in a circle singing their own version of the Mardi Gras song while a corresponding number of men dancing around them pretending to whip them with riding crops and bullwhips.

The Mardi Gras is also based on a reversal of the social order, where supposed chaos rules. The king of the Rio Mardi Gras, for example, is Re Bobo, the King of Fools, or the King of Misrule. As early as medieval Europe, festivals of this sort have been associated with the Mardi Gras. The French chose le Roi des Fous. The English chose the Boy Bishop. In each case, the point of the celebration was to reverse the social order, to allow the lower classes a day to parody the upper classes. Men dressed as women, women as men. The poor dressed as rich, the rich as poor. The old dressed as young, the young as old. Black dressed as white, white as black. Within this ritual chaos, however, was a strict rules system without which such potentially threatening play was impossible. The ritual fool, or clown, was an important character in the celebration of Mardi Gras. The French clown was sometimes called le paillasse, or strawman, and could be identified by his clothes which were stuffed with straw.

A third key element of the Mardi Gras is its processional nature. Unlike other traditional festivals which occur in a fixed place, the Mardi Gras moves about through the world, bringing its celebration to people, sometimes whether they like it or not. The Mardi Gras processions move through towns and countryside alike invading public spaces like roads, rendering them impassible and commercial districts rendering them inoperable. Banks and merchants are forced to close for the madness.

A fourth element of the Mardi Gras is anonymity. Masks provide an opportunity to shed inhibitions and to take on roles for the day. Otherwise serious people can be transformed into clowns and otherwise timid people can become leaders. The altering of facial features, by means of masks or face painting, has long been associated with rites of passage for the same
reasons.

A fifth element involves the ritual altering of consciousness. In some cultures, such as in South America and Africa, poisonous plants were ingested to cause delirious dreams for their rites of passage. Members of some American Indian tribes used to allow themselves to be bitten by poisonous snakes or scorpions to achieve delirium. Others smoked marijuana or peyote to the same effect. In European culture, the ritual consumption of alcohol has long been a traditional way of altering the consciousness of celebrants.

LA COURSE DU MARDI GRAS

The country Mardi Gras celebration of South Louisiana differs from its carnaval counterparts in New Orleans and Lafayette. Like them, it is a processional festivity, but unlike them, it stems from the medieval fête de la quémande, a ceremonial begging tradition, with additional influences from the frontier heritage of the Louisiana prairies. The fête de la quémande was celebrated by a procession of revelers who travelled through the countryside offering some sort of performance in exchange for gifts. Several modern celebrations are vestiges from this

same source: costumed children making threats of trick or treat on Halloween, Christmas carolers singing for cups of hot chocolate or hot toddies, the charivari group making noise outside a neighbor's house until invited in for food or drink, Irish mummers performing impromtu plays from house to house in exchange for a drink during the Christmas season. Other Franco-American ceremonial begging traditions associated with Mardi Gras and Lent are La Guignollée in Missouri and la Mi-Carême in Quebec. The Mardi Gras Indian tradition in New Orleans is also similar in that bands of masked and costumed men go from bar to bar on Mardi Gras day singing and dancing with the expectation of being invited in for a drink. Some notable New Orleans music ÷KIstems from this tradition, including such songs as "Iko Iko" and "Me Big Chief." Similarly during the course de Mardi Gras, on the southwestern Louisiana prairies, a band of masked riders visit their neighbors in the countryside around little towns, singing and dancing to the traditional Mardi Gras song (which has its origins in medieval modal music), at each that will receive them. The goal of these performances is a contribution to their communal gumbo shared later that day. Sometimes this is a bag of flour, or rice, a sack of onions or even money, but ideally it is a live chicken which the participants are expected to catch themselves.

Reinforcing its medieval origins, the traditional costumes for the course have roots in medieval dress. In addition to the unavoidable modern clowns, monsters, and cartoon characters are the conical hats (in parody of noble women and also long associated with dunces or fools), mitres (in parody of the clergy), and more rarely, mortarboards

(in parody of scholars and clerics). False collars and brightly colored costumes often in harlequin sequences add to the medieval flavor. A certain medieval atmosphere is enhanced by the processional nature of the Mardi Gras celebration. Instead of taking place in a fixed location, like a festival, it moves through the countryside. Moreover, musicians who accompany the ride in a closed wagon following the riders evokes images of the jesters of the Middle Ages whose only role was to provide entertainment for the court, and just as the jester never really participated directly in the festivities for which he provided entertainment, the Mardi Gras musicians remain marginal figures, never coming out of their wagon to take part in the activities of the riders.

Other medieval survivals have been indentified in Kinder's version of the Mardi Gras. There most participants walk the entire way, frequently pretending to flog each other with rolled burlap sacks, reminiscent of the processions of flagellators who sought to atone for the sins of their society during the plagues of the Middle Ages. There also, brief spontaneous plays are sometimes performed, including "The Dead Man Revived," once popular among the miracle players on the steps of medieval cathedrals. In this pre-Authurian play, one participant feigns death and his companions "revive" him by dropping wine or beer into his mouth. An analogy to this traditional element can also be found in ancient drinking songs, like "Chevalier de la table ronde," and "Fais trois tours de la table ronde."

In addition to its medieval begging celebration origins, the course de Mardi Gras is also characterized by a mystique of toughness

reminiscent of the days of the American Wild West. The anonymity of the masked riders provided an ideal reckoning ground for quarreling parties. In earlier times scores were often settled on this day with bare fists, knives and even pistols. Additionally, groups of riders, overwhelmed by the festival spirit, mildly terrorized many visited households, forcing women to dance, sometimes vandalizing property, whether intentionally or accidentally. While the main party distracted the hosts in the front yard, riders sometimes strayed to the back of the house to steal from the kitchen. Throughout the 19th century and even into the early part of the 20th century, the course de Mardi Gras could be found in most areas of French Louisiana from the Mississippi River to the Texas border. With the arrival of Americanization and the "civilizing" effect of new schools and churches, however, the often rowdy celebration was banned from many communities and eventually disappeared from the annual cycle of Louisiana French folklife. In the early 1950s, a group of cultural activists in the Mamou area, under the leadership of Paul Tate and Revon Reed, undertook to revive the traditional Mardi Gras run. They sought guidance from older members of the community, notably from Lezime Fontenot, "Petit Nan" Augustine, and Marcellus Deshotels, who remembered running Mardi Gras and even remembered the words of the traditional Mardi Gras song which itself describes the nature of the celebration.

In reviving the tradition, Tate and Reed took great pains to render the celebration respectable and relatively safe for both riders and hosts, without emasculating the rite of passage. This effort, anchored

in the absolute control of the capitaine, encouraged the continuation of the course by virtually eliminating fights and the element of danger. There is, however, an interesting tension between begging and demanding which persists even today. Riders await permission to approach a house, then charge it as though taking it by storm. They then sing and dance for an offering, then chase the chicken through the barnyard as though stealing it. Riders play at changing roles from beggar to outlaw, singing and dancing while intimidating non-participants.

This celebration has since been revived in several area towns, including Church Point, Eunice, Basile, and L'Anse Meg. There are now even a few courses for women only, such as in Petit Mamou, near Basile, in Evangeline Parish. Mixture of both sexes is rare, however. Ironically, the "males only" restriction is said to have originated among the women of Mamou who intended to reduce the possibility of anonymous carousing among their men. Most other towns followed suit in reviving their versions of the celebration. Among these riders, there exists the same sorts of sexual freedoms that one encounters in other exclusively male groups such as sports teams or campers. For this occasion, men do things that they would not ordinarily do in mixed company, such as dance together, walk arm in arm, and embrace each other. In fact, a popular custome motif involves the reversal of sexual identity by wearing wigs, dresses and even false bosoms. This kind of activity happens frequently among who have no doubts about their own identities. The toughest men can afford to play at being feminine without arousing any suspicions concerning their sexuality. The Mamou

version of the celebration by virtue of its precedence and of its deliberate sense of tradition, provides an ideal model for understanding the structure of the country Mardi Gras. A certain aura of outlawry has not entirely vanished from the modern version of the celebration in Mamou, which effectively resists transformation into a simple tourist attraction by its sheer toughness. In fact, the celebration, strictly limited to male participation, is sufficiently exacting to be a functional rite of passage for the young men of the community. Reminiscent of the rite of passage in primitive societies, the social initiation on the morning of the ride is accentuated by solitude and anonymity, and all inhibitions being removed, the initiate passes through the essential part of the ordeal: being all he dares to be. Except for the list of rules imposed by the game itself, there is virtually no limit to the personal freedom of expression available to the rider.

Participation in the Mamou Mardi Gras can begin several weeks in advance with a series of informal meetings to determine certain administrative roles for the event, such as beer truck personnel, tractor drivers (to pull wagons for those without horses), and musicians, all of whom will not actually run in the Mardi Gras. The capitaine, named for life by his predecessor, choses his co-capitaines who will assist him during the ride. Just as in the American West, often the toughest and hardest to control become co-capitaines, thereby channeling their energies in the right direction. here are no elections; the Mardi Gras Riders Association makes no concessions to democracy. Brief business meetings quickly become rallies, building excitement for the coming ride.

On the eve of the celebration, riders make final preparations for the course. These preparations are often complicated by the fact that many riders handle horses once a year, on Mardi Gras. Moreover, many riders, to avoid recognition, exchanges horses several times before Mardi Gras day, and since many local riders are in the habit of playing practical jokes, or niches, on one another, it is not uncommon on the morning of the ride to find one's horse with all the tail hairs pulled out or some other sort of mischief.

After settling on a plan for the next day, riders usually convene informally on the eve of the ride in a local bar for some pre-celebration festivities. For the past several years, Revon Reed has presented an excerpt from "Dedans le sud de la Louisiane," a documentary film of a previous Mamou Mardi Gras by French filmmaker Jean-Pierre Brunot, in Fred's Lounge that evening, and most of the men in effect see themselves engaged in the activities that they are so eagerly awaiting the following day. As they watch themselves charging farmhouses on command from the capitaine, dancing wildly, singing, drinking and chasing chickens, emotions soar until the audience is in a frenzy of anticipation. A festive spirit is maintained throughout the evening with the driving sounds of live Cajun music played spontaneously by a number of local musicians. As one might expect, the Mardi Gras figures prominently in the repertoire of the evening. What happens, then, resembles closely the ancient tradition of telling war stories or singing epics of adventure to rally the troops the night before a battle.

At dawn the next morning, riders don their costumes and masks, saddle their horses and start down the country roads and back streets to join their fellows. Arriving at the appointed gathering place, the local American Legion Hall, the brilliantly arrayed riders mill around, usually somewhat slowly because of the revelry of the previous evening. Most riders know one another but, for a while at least, they recognize few. As time passes, the area becomes filled with rowdy, masked horsemen. At a certain point the capitaine requests that the riders gather inside the hall for the reading of the rules. The capitaine and his co-capitaines are unmasked so that they may represent the band of revelers to each household they visit. They are further identified by their cowboy hats and long multi-colored capes, usually a two-color combination of purple, yellow, red and green. From the time he takes command of the celebration at the reading of the rules to the restrained and relatively orderly re-entry into town later in the day, the capitaine's reign is absolute. This is a result of a tacit agreement among all riders who play the game. For an entire day, a considerable number of adult males willingly suspend reality for the sake of the ritual celebration, the very nature of which demands unquestioning submission to the authority of a chosen leader whose role is to act as intermediary between the madness of the procession and the outside world they will visit.

The rules are read first in French then in English by the capitaine who stands on a chair to address the riders, called Mardi Gras. The rules are designed to maintain a firm structural framework for the festivities. Some are preventative: no Mardi Gras shall advance beyond

the capitaine on the route; no Mardi Gras shall enter private property without the explicit permission of the capitaine; no Mardi Gras shall consume any liquor except that which is distributed by the capitaine and his assistants, no Mardi Gras shall bear arms or weapons of any kind, including knives, guns or sticks. Others are meant to keep the tradition intact: no Mardi Gras shall throw beads, doubloons or trinkets or any sort anywhere along the route; all Mardi Gras riders are expected to dismount from horses and wagons to sing and dance at the homes which give an offering for the gumbo.

At the end of the English translation of the rules, the riders file through the only unlocked door to be genuinely frisked. This is as much to prevent women from infiltrating the ride as to enforce the no weapons rule. The age limit of eighteen is sometimes mitigated by circumstances like the company of a guardian or a judgement of maturity. Riders then mount their steeds and unmounted troops mount the wagons. The procession then leaves town to the tune of the Mardi Gras song, which will be played again dozens of times during the day, and proceeds under the strict leadership of the capitaine and his assistants on a predetermined but secret route.

As the procession approaches the first house, the tension of the previous evening begins to mount in anticipation of the traditional charge. The capitaine halts the band of riders on the road and rides ahead alone with raised white flag to ask the residents' permission to enter, according to custom. If permission is granted, he drops his flag to signal the invitation to charge the house.

Surrounding the front yard, the riders dismount and begin singing and dancing to the Mardi Gras, played on each visit by the live musicians who accompany the ride in their own wagon. Previously all riders were required to know at least a few verses of the Mardi Gras song and they sang it themselves during the course of the day. In recent years, this tradition has faded somewhat, and the ritual performance of the song has become the responsibility of the musicians. Some of the more daring riders might playfully snatch up the lady of the house and her daughters and dance with them in the crowd. Children are often the object of some mock terrorism by the masked riders, sometimes being whisked away from their parents for a brief moment in an unsolicited lesson in being away from the safety of home and family.

After an appropriate amount of revelry, the man of the house brings out an offering for the Mardi Gras. This may be flour, rice, onions, oil, or money. Ideally, however, it is a live chicken which he throws high in the air. Those closest to it chase it down and the captor jubilantly holds up his prize for all to see before surrendering it to one of the co-capitaines who will place it in a cage until it can be transported back to town to find its way into the gumbo. After a bit more dancing and socializing, the capitaine blows his cow horn to call the riders to order and the procession moves on to the next house.

At regular intervals between houses, the capitaine calls a halt to the procession for a beer stop. A pickup truck loaded with beer parks in the middle of the road and the riders file by to receive their ration of beer under the scrutiny of the co-capitaines. The fact that alcohol consumption is controlled does not mean that it is not liberal.

Many riders have ample opportunity to work themselves into a state of ritual inebriation. This aspect of the Mardi Gras, when viewed out of context, can make the celebration appear reckless and unkempt. Yet it can appear less offensive when viewed with the perspective of history and tradition in terms of the ancient tradition of altered consciousness long associated with such rituals.

Sometimes, especially during these beer stops, a rider might wander out in front of the group past the capitaine only to be briskly reminded of the rule requiring all riders to stay behind the capitaine at all times. Errors are corrected sheepishly; no one challenges the authority of the capitaine.

While the riders show complete respect for the capitaine, they show considerably less for everyone else. There are always countless photographers, journalists, ethnographers, and other such "foreigners" accompanying the ride and, often enough, an over-zealous documenter will get in the way of a group of riders. Patience with this interference soon wears thin and more than one visitor has found himself surrounded by taunting riders, pushed into a roadside ditch or even stung by the flick of a riding crop. Ordinarily, the capitaine deftly disregards these activities, owing allegiance to the ride itself and not to those who would witness it from outside. The Mamou Mardi Gras, by far the most heavily documented of the courses, has ironically also been among the most successful in resisting the media and tourists. Long-time capitaine Jasper Manuel answered requests for hand signals to the next house from media personnel with a casual, "If I think about it, but as you can imagine, I've got a lot of other things

on my mind." He usually remembered for a house or two, then somehow forgot, often just before a turn which effectively pinned the front runners at the corner until the procession was safely past. On the Church Point run of 1979, an ABC television crew filming a segment for the program 20/20 somehow succeeded in having a charge repeated because they missed it the first time. During this repeat, several horses fell and at least one rider received minor injuries. Since then, the capitaine has tended to ignore such requests from the media.

Invariably, horses and riders are weary and ragged as they approach the edge of town at the end of the long ride in mid-afternoon. The capitaine orders a stop just inside the city limits for the riders to regroup, repair tack and costumes, and regain a certain composure for the grand, triumphant re-entry into town. Riders present themselves as surviving warriors to those townsfolk who did not participate in the ordeal. With a strong sense of brotherhood based on their shared experiences, they parade down the length of the crowded main street in haughty silence, once again to the tune of the Mardi Gras song, deigning now and then to wave in victory to the spectators along the way. Finally, the band of Cajun musicians who have been performing for a street dance in town (designed by run organizers to keep as many visitors as possible in town) give the stage to the Mardi Gras musicians for a grand performance of the Mardi Gras song, which can last up to half an hour, while the riders dance in the crowd. Most riders then retire to a quiet spot to await their hard earned supper, the ceremonial gumbo, made with chickens caught along the way. Now the gumbo must be stretched with chickens from the market to feed the

growing multitudes of visitors. Riders eat first. Some go home to rest or take their horses back to the barn before returning later for the masked ball which marks the final hours of this final fling of revelry before the beginning of Lent the next day on Ash Wednesday. All festivities stop abruptly at midnight and many of Tuesday's rowdiest riders can be found on their knees receiving ashes on their foreheads on Wednesday.

CAJUN FOLK MEDICINE

Jay Edwards

Folk medicine consists of a body of lore and practice having to do with identification and treating of illness and injury. It also deals with the definition of illness and the recognition of culturally defined syndromes. Like the people of most cultures, Cajuns have maintained a well-defined body of folk medicine. Its practices occur at two different levels of Cajun society. On one hand there is a large body of lore which is generally shared among most older Cajuns--particularly those of rural background. Knowledge of how to cure warts or lessen pain during childbirth fall into this category. Another body of lore is the special preserve of the folk curer, the traiteur. Many special ailments may be treated with the aid of this specialist.

The Functions of Cajun Folk Medicine

The folk beliefs and practices of the Cajuns function in response to a number of specific problems, many of which are not unique to Acadians. This particular configuration of practices results, in part, from the relative isolation and cultural homogeneity of the Acadians in Louisiana, particularly those who settled west of the Atchafalaya. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, professional medical help was generally unavailable to the common people of the swamps and prairies. Even when professional doctors were available they were often considered too expensive and too impersonal. Folk medical practitioners

met special needs not treated by the professional doctor. They dealt with the spiritual and emotional requirements of the individual more effectively, perhaps, than with his physiological problems. To rural Cajuns, many folk cures were considered superior to those of the professional physician.

Until quite recently, only the most serious injuries and illnesses were treated by professionals. In contrast to the extreme sparsity of professional doctors in the nineteenth century, traiteurs were to be found in every community. Their treatments combined elements of the mystical and the spiritual with the practical and well-proven wisdom of the ages. Powerful agents such as Catholic prayers, candles, prayer beads and the full moon were employed in order to effect a cure. The significance of such amulets and symbols was that they were drawn from the common belief system of the Acadian people. Everyone knew that, if used only in the correct manner, they worked. It was the traiteur's job to specialize in the knowledge of curing performance.

The Classes of Cajun Folk Medicine

In her 1975 article on "The Folklore of Acadiana," Pat Rickels divided Cajun folk medicine into four general categories. These were: 1) faith healing; 2) religio-magic treatments; 3 magic; and 4) herbal or purely materialistic medicine (Rickels 1975:152):

The first, faith healing, is both the simplest and the most spiritual. It is most often practiced by traiteurs, who believe they have a special charisma, a divine gift for healing. Traiteurs who work through faith alone are usually devout Christians, most often

Catholics, and look upon their healing power as an integral part of their religion.

Typically, an individual traiteur specializes in only one or a few specific kinds of treatment. The traiteur may cure sunstroke or bleeding or other conditions such as thrash-a kind of fungus disease of the mouth common to young children. Curing performances are vary individualistic. A typical cure may be accomplished through the laying on of hands, making the sign of the cross and the mumbling of secret prayers, drawn from passages of the Bible. Sometimes, however, it is not necessary for the patient to be in the presence of the traiteur for the cure to be effective.

Traiteurs learn their trade from other traiteurs, usually close relatives of the next ascending generation. The "gift" is passed on from one person to a trusted member of the family; then it is lost to the one who passed it on. Traiteurs were always considered particularly "good" persons in their communities. The title "doctor" was often given to them. They were never associated with voodoo or hoodoo doctors, however. It is clear that traiteurs were considered to be of the same status as professional doctors. Traiteurs generally requested no compensation for their services. Some even preferred not to be thanked at all as this would lessen the charitable nature of their deeds. Some informants report that traiteurs sometimes did accept remuneration for their services, but always in kind rather than in the form of money. The gift of a chicken, some game or some potatoes would suffice.

In the past, the most popular form of folk medicine in Acadiana has been what Rickels calls religio-magic treatment. It relies on some physical agent which has been blessed or charmed through a religious act. The agent may be officially blessed, as in the case of holy water, or it may be blessed on the spot as a part of the treatment itself. Infants and children are often "cured" by placing a string about a portion of their body. The string has a specified number of knots ("balls") tied in it--often nine. The same number of prayers are said at the time it is placed. The string is then left in place until it falls off. By the time the string falls off the harmful condition should have disappeared. So strongly did some people feel about the efficacy of this method of curing that doctors treating sick children often left the curing strings in place.

Another example of a popular religio-magic treatment is the "Litany of the Holy Sepulchre." A prayer is written on a sheet of paper in the form of a cross. Such a sheet is believed to hold certain miraculous powers including the prevention of epileptic seizures, bodily injuries, and the reduction of pain in childbirth. Religio-magic healing is carried out without the aid of a traiteur.

Some Cajuns practiced pure magic in curing. Catholic (or other religious) practices played no role in this form of treatment. Acadian magic was not unlike other forms of magic practiced widely in the world. Much of its symbolism relied on the twin principles of contagion and visual similarity. Evils such as illness may be transmitted through a ritual in which contact with some agent permits it to be drained away from the body of the victim. Note that this kind of transfer can work two ways, both for and against well being. In Acadiana, for example,

there has been a belief that warts may be cured by pricking them with a sharp object, allowing the blood to drop onto some gains of corn, and then getting a chicken to eat the grains of corn. The chicken will develop the warts and the victim will loose them. The "scapegoat" theory of ancient magic is still alive in such folk practices, and they are not unique to Acadian Americans. Most such beliefs and practices have close parallels in the folk medicine of Anglo-America and other areas settled by Europeans.

Homeopathic magic is also practiced. As defined by Sir James Frazer, this Herbal medicine has been popular in Acadiana since the earliest days of settlement. It involves the collection of wild or domesticated plants for curative purposes. The derivatives of these plants are believed to work empirically, rather than through spiritual force. Different substances are ingested or applied to various portions of the body, not only plants but other common substances as well. They may be made into salves, greases, teas or poultices. For example, egg white and spider webs are used in poultices to draw out splinters and to stop bleeding, respectively. Various commercially available products are also employed for folk cures. For example, Octagon soap, kerosene, and liquors are employed in folk cures. Patent medicines of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are also still relied upon, despite the fact that they are long out of favor with modern medicine.

Typical examples of Acadian folk cures and practices are described below.

Examples of Cajun Folk Remedies

The following examples of folk remedies are drawn from a the fieldwork of Maida Bergeron. In the spring of 1975 she collected 157 curing practices and beliefs from women in Assumption Parish. Cures for colds and many other kinds of illnesses were collected. The people of this parish are typical of rural Acadiana. Her informants lived in the vicinity of Lake Verret. They are less well-to-do and more isolated than most Acadians but like the descendants of the original Acadian population, they exhibit a high degree of independence and self-reliance. Few slaves were brought into the area, for example, because the inhabitants could not afford to purchase them. The families were of relatively "pure" Acadian stock.

In the following list of remedies, the locations of similar practices are listed in brackets. Although these locations cannot be said to indicate the sources of Acadian folk medical practices, in many cases, similar practices derive from similar locations.

COLDS. Take hot pepper, whiskey and sugar and boil it into a drink. Then go to bed. Pour turpentine (alternate: tallow) on a piece of flannel and put that on your chest for nine days.

CONGESTION. Burn sugar in a pot and inhale the vapors.

CROUP. Take hot coffee sweetened and melt butter in it.

SORE THROAT. Take a little hot water, not too hot. Gargle with salt. Throw it away three times.

FEVER. Camphor or alcohol rubs and aspirin, then drink l'herb a malot (swamp lily root soaked in water).

STOMACHACHE. Castor oil. Place a warm plate on the stomach. Put a small drop of anise in water and drink it.

CONSTIPATION. Buy Black Draught from the drugstore. It used to be in the dry form so you had to scald it first. After that, drink Sweet Bay Tea or l'herbe a malot.

CUTS. Use Black Salve (Ichthanmol) from the drugstore. Put a spider web on it to stop bleeding. Salt meat fat and turpentine (kerosine), tied to the place where the cut is.

INFECTED CUT. Use la mauve (a curly, crawling grass). Smash it and put it on the cut.

BLOOD POISONING. Catch a big old cockroach and put it in whisky. Put it on an infection for several days.

WORMS. Take a little muslin sack and put garlic in it. Tie it around a child's neck. It will stop them from having worms.

BABY CUTTING TEETH. Put an odd number of alligator teeth around its neck.

BEE STING. Take some wet chewing tobacco and put it on the sting. It will stop burning.

IMPURE BLOOD. Mix sulfur and water. Take it for nine days. Creme of tartar with Lemonade or water will purify the blood. It's taken nine days in spring and fall. The lemonade just makes it taste better.

HANGOVER. Drink another one.

COLIC. Buy Paregoric.

IMPETIGO. If you have Indian Fire, you stand in front of the armoire or the kitchen safe and fan yourself with the doors nine times for nine days.

ARTHRITIS OR RHEUMATISM. Make a brass or copper bracelet and keep it on the place that hurts. Don't take it off or the pain will hit you hard.

WARTS. "This lady treated a wart on my leg. She rubbed a nickel on it and she said something like, 'Whoever you spend this nickel to, is gonna catch it.' And you know, the guy got one and mine had gone away." [This is known as "selling a wart" in Anglo-Saxon folklore.]

NOSEBLEED. Make a cross of sticks on the ground. Hold the child so that the blood will drip onto the cross. It'll stop.

SUNSTROKE. Go to a traiteur. They give you some flowers of the chinaball or lilac tree. "They tie the leaves all around your head to get the fever out. She never charges you but you may give her a donation. You know prayers never hurt anyone."

FALLEN TONSILS. "There used to be an old man who could treat la luette in bas. He would find this little area on top of your head that had fallen down and he'd gather some hair there and give it a jerk. You'd hear it pop, and the tonsils were back in place.

MENSTRUAL FLOW. "In our period, my mamma wouldn't let us go swimming. They said it would stop your period. 'It's gonna kill ya'll. It won't stop!' (We went swimming anyway.)"

Interpretation of Acadian Folk Cures

Acadian folk medicine, like so many other aspects of this culture, is a blending of elements from numerous and far-flung sources. The oldest identifiable source is clearly Greek herbal and homeopathic medicine. The use of sulfur in water to purify the blood, for example is reported in Greek sources (Gunther, 1959:643). Indeed, the near obsession of many Cajuns with blood purity, may derive ultimately from Greece. Like the ancient Greeks, the French and modern Cajuns use alum to cure cold sores, fats (to "warm and mollify the body"), egg white as a cure for eye troubles and bags of salt to ease the pain of toothache. Perhaps the most dominant source for Acadian folk medicine is post medieval French homeopathic medicine. The French used rose water to wash out the eyes, just as Cajuns do today. Many French-derived cures are still common to French Canada as well as Louisiana. The plant, la mauve, for example, is unknown in English folk medicine. It is mentioned in Gagon's Le folklor Bourbonnais (1947:219, 239) as being one of the four traditional "ramolitives" or relaxer plants. La Mauve was used for constipation. The emphasis on herbal preventatives also appears to derive from eighteenth century French medicine. The use of a tea made from peach tree leaves, still used today, may be derived from the peach flower syrup brought to Louisiana by French colonial doctors in 1730 (Duffy 1958: 59). Lemons were believed to have preventative powers by French colonial doctors and turpentine was introduced by the same doctors in 1731. Other cures with

direct parallels in French areas include using a warm plate for stomachache or cramps, putting vinegar on ringworm, and treating headache with prayers (by a Traiteur).

Certain plant cures such as tobacco (infections) and sassafras (blood purification) are derived from American Indian traditions. Cajuns use tobacco poultices for bee stings, headaches, snakebites, boils and other problems. The popularity of tobacco may represent a reintroduction of the use of this plant, which was believed to be a panacea after it was introduced into Europe in the sixteenth century. Other practices, such as the use of bags of garlic tied about the ankles to prevent snakebite, are almost certainly not Aboriginal, though they are attributed to American Indians by Acadian informants.

Many traditional Acadian cures derive from the best medical thought of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. A medical handbook of 1812 recommends wearing garlic around the neck as a cure for worms, for example. Camphor was a popular element in the control of fevers in the early 19th century. Epson salts was recommended as a laxative in medical manuals as late as the early 20th century. The use of salt as a gargle for sore throat, lemon and honey for a cough, and paragoric for colic also fall into the category of survivals from earlier medical practice. As such, they are not unique to Cajun culture, of course.

Some of the cures found around Lake Verret do seem to be unique to Louisiana Cajuns. The herbes, la mauve and l'herbe a malot are used in

several cures. Burning a cane reed under an infection, and putting garlic around a baby's neck to cure worms are cures not recorded in other areas of the state or nation.

Though much of this early medicine has been replaced and long forgotten by modern technical medical science, it persists in varying degrees among the folk of the rural isolates of North America, such as Acadiana.

CAJUN FOLK LAW

Janet Shoemaker and Jay Edwards

Very little mention is made of folklaw among Cajuns in the literature. The topic most often addressed in relation to social mores is courtship and marriage. These rules mentioned are usually held within the context of the fais-do-do; i.e. the consequences of a young lady leaving the dance hall unescorted by her mother (Del Sesto, 1975:127; Post, 1974:154). Other accounts pertain to the aquiring of permission by the young man to escort a young lady anywhere (Collard, 1975:113) and the ostracizing of an unwed mother from the home and society until marriage (East, 1980:32). Many books dealing with the social life of Cajuns mention the old-time courting practices which are no longer in effect in most of Acadiana today.

Along a different line, Del Sesto (1975) refers to the cockfights of South Lousiana and the rules that prevail in that social situation. Every man must support the cock of his primary social group within the community, even if it is a losing cock. Failure to cheer on one's group's cock will result in justified ridicule and humiliation from the others of one's group.

The subject of folklaw in reference to boundary disputes among the fishermen and hunters of the bayous is minimal in the literature. There seem to be three categories of writers: those who are writing for research purposes, those who have lived with Cajuns and are writing about them, and those who are Cajuns themselves and are writing about the wonderful simplicity of their lives. All three are as equally

uninterested in writing about the legal (or non-legal) disputes that take place in the marshes and swamps, but are more interested in uplifting the virtues of Cajunism. However, several sources were found to make minimal mention of these sorts of cases.

The most elaborate desciption of this sort of situation comes from Comeaux (1972, 20) who claims that the concept of "fishing grounds" is strong. And individual will consider a particular river or bayou his own personal property, regardless of the fact that it is legally federal territory. Hyde (1932, 9) notes that one's neighbors recognize his claim and don't question his rights to that property if he doesn't infringe on theirs. Consequently, any man who consistently maintains a certain area is recognized to have a claim on that area; others can travel through, but must not use it for economic purposes (Comeaux, 1972:21). Hyde notes, however, that parish officers are occasionally called in to settle a dispute over a claim. He also briefly mentions that one who moves his houseboat to different locations where fish are biting is very likely to cause a stir among his more settled neighbors.

Disputes do arise, for it is noted that there are means for dealing with tresspassers, although there are very few accounts or specifics given. Kammer (1941, 104) sums it up under the term "trapper's justice" used in the marsh areas wherein a land-user is justified in shooting anyone caught tresspassing on his trapping land. Comeaux (1972, 20) also mentions that the fishermen in the swamps think it perfectly acceptable to use whatever force is necessary to remove someone from their fishing grounds.

Hallowell (1979, 46-47) gives a tresspassing account told to him by an old trapper in the marsh. The old gentleman was running his traps one day when he spotted the sheriff duckhunting on his property. After informing the sheriff that he was tresspassing, at which the sheriff made no move to leave, the old man popped him one in the face. Naturally, the case was taken to court, but he had connections and the judge let him off, and the
sheriff was never seen out his way again.

Another cause of conflict approached by Comeaux (1972, 40) is the presence of sportsmen in the marshes. On the whole, the activities of the sportsmen and the commercial fishermen balance each other out, but sport fishermen will steal fish out of the commercials' nets, tear them up, and have a general disregard for the fishermen in general. The problem is compounded by the fact that sportsmen have much more political clout than the poor fisherman who makes a living by fishing. Comeaux does not give any specific incidents. Hallowell (1979, 47) again tells of the old trapper's problems with sportsmen. Spotting three sportsmen after an otter in one of his traps one day, his ire was quickly aroused. He ran toward them yelling and waving his shotgun in a threatening manner at which the sportsmen ran.

Aside from the boundary disputes, the problem of fur buying and selling has been a problem in the marshes and swamps for years. In a 1941 account of the problem, Kammer (p. 92) briefly summarizes the history of the property rights in the bayous and the federal governments' more recent claims to the land and the demand for shares from the trappers and hunters. He reports that there were incidents of violence in the St. Bernard area over tresspassing claims due to the

requirement that trappers and fishers had to get a permit to work in any area not privately owned. From 1924-1935, Kammer claims that the Times-Picayune reported continual flare-ups. By 1941, the trappers were paying rent to trap on government land, and apparantly, the problems and disputes had been somewhat resolved.

Ramsey (1957, 182-201) gives an account of a family she stayed with and their attempts to cheat the buyers who bought their best furs at very low prices. She joined them on a mock funeral one night as they carried "Tante Chloe" down the river in a coffin to an illegal buyer who gave them a better price for their furs.

Other disregards for hunting and trapping restrictions are mentioned by Comeaux (1972, 93). "Outlawing", which consists of either hunting out of season, or hunting illegal game, is fairly common among swampdwellers as they see no reason why they should change their hunting habits, or stop taking what they can use. Once again, sportsmen with political clout have restricted their hunting which provides the mainstay of their diet. Comeaux relates of at least one game warden's claim to have arrested almost every man in the village at least once for a violation.

GAMES

Children's games

Barry Jean Ancelet

Like most elements of Louisiana French culture, traditional Cajun children's games were usually improvised. Most were very simple requiring no props or ones easily found around the house or on the farm. They were also creolized. Some were brought from France. Others were adopted from neighboring cultures. Many were made up on the spot and lasted only the time they took to play themselves out. Others were somewhat more durable and were passed on from one generation to the next. In the countryside, children of a fairly wide range of ages played together. Later, schools began to narrow the age distribution of groups as children tended to play within their classes.

Games are an extremely regional and highly variable tradition. It would be impossible to record all the variant games and names for those games throughout south Louisiana. This report is not intended to be exhaustive. It is rather intended to present an overview with representative examples to give a general idea of the tradition of historical children's games among the Cajuns.

Infant games include primarily those activities which parents do with their babies. Most of these are simple and improvised, like O mais arréte, which is essentially a chase game, equivalent to "I'm going to get you." Ride le cheval is played by a child and a sitting parent who crosses his/her legs and seats the child on the raised foot, moving it to simulate a horse's motion. This game is usually

accompanied by the chant, "Petit galop, petit galop," and is often ended with the word, "Whoa."

Ring games required a group and were usually played indoors when inclement weather prevented children from going outside. In cache-cache la bague, one player hid a small token, usually a ring, in his/her hands and pretended to pass it to each of the other players, dropping in the hands of one, all the while saying, "Cache-cache la bague." Afterwards, players had to guess which one of them actually had the token, among much bluffing and counter bluffing.

In Petit mouton, la queue coupée, a player walked around the room holding a handkerchief behind his back, chanting, "Petit mouton, la queue coupée," while walking around the other players sitting in a circle facing the center. At one point he dropped the handkerchief behind one of the players. The players were to guess when he dropped the handkerchief behind them and catch it. He continued walking around the circle until he arrived at the place where he dropped the handkerchief to see if it was still there. If it was, he picked it up and resumed his part. If a player did notice, he would pick up the handkerchief and try to tag the walker before he reached his place in the circle.

Another group game was faire la statue in which the players moved about freely until the leader told them to stop. They would then freeze in position. The leader would then pick the most interesting as the next leader.

Word games were especially popular at night and during inclement weather when children were forced to stay indoors. Pin-pi-po-lo-ron

was a counting rhyme often used to determine who was going to be it in other games. It was also played to determine who would receive some other token reward or punishment, such as banishment to a corner or a pichenet (finger thump). One version (there are many) of the chant goes:

Pin-pi-po-lo-ron
Va aller faire son pot de lait
Bouillir chez Madame Michelle Aimée
Si il vient une petite souris,
Foutez-la un coup de baton
Derriére la téte.

In this version, each player put a finger in a circle. The rhyme was performed by a leader who touched a different finger with each syllable. The player on whose finger the rhyme ended had to leave the room and the leader went to ask if he/she preferred to return by plume ou piquant. If by plume he/she was taken back into the room by the hair; if by piquant, he/she was dragged by the foot. (Reported by Thomas Guidry, Louisiana French Folklore student collection, 1978; USL/FA) Other versions have the exiled player try to guess a number or a color to reenter. Another word game, Pim pam, was like an extended knock-knock joke. It sounded like parody of traditional greeting patterns in which people try to determine extended family connections, and provided an opportunity to catch an unsuspecting partner at the end: Pim pam. Qui c'est qu'est? C'est moi, Dédé. Quel Dédé? Dédé LaCart. Quel LaCart? LaCart Boyeau. Quel Boyeau? Boyeau Lison. Quel Lison? Lison Cochon. Quel Cochon? Cocho toi-même. Some word games were

tests of agility and were accompanied by gestures. In Pigeon vole, each player placed a finger on the floor or a table before them. A leader called out various animals and things (Pigeon vole, papillon vole, moqueur vole, carencro vole, mouche vole...). Players were to raise their fingers only when the animal could actually fly. The leader tried to catch players by slipping in other animals or things which can not fly (brique vole, maison vole, serpent vole, cochon vole...).

Some children developed secret languages, Louisiana French versions of "pig latin," adding the first consonant of each word to the syllable égué at the end of each word, as in "u-tégué as-végué as-pégué al-égué-er-légué (Tu vas pas aller). There were also taunts and cheers, used as epithets.

Running games required only the participation of several children, usually pitting one person against the rest of the group. In these games, the person chosen to be it was often called le chien. Some of these games included 25 bas and 25 haut, variations on tag in which being either on Mr off the ground was considered safe or base. Cache-et-fait, was a Louisiana French version of Hide-and-Seek.

Danses rondes, or round dances, were the Louisiana French equivalent to the Anglo-American play party songs and dances, like "Ring Around the Roses," and "Shoo Fly," in which groups of participants danced to the their own singing. These were especially popular among pre-adolescent children. For many, this was a preliminary step toward courtship as a first introduction to dancing and socializing with the opposite sex. As group dances, they were less engaged than the couple dancing which would come later. There were

special songs associated with the dances. In certain cases, like "Papillon, vole" and "Ah mon beau chateau," the dancers acted out the lines of the song with stylized movements.

In cache le fouet, one player hid a whip or a switch. The other players searched for it, with assistance from the hider in the form of hot and cold instructions: "T'es dans le feu" or "T'es dans l'eau." When a player found the whip or switch, he chased the other players with it, whipping them if he could, until they reached base.

Hand rolled clay balls were made of terre grasse, the clay found along bayou and coulée banks and dried in the shade (to avoid cracking) to shoot in slingshots. Slingshots were made by hand from the forks of trees, ideally a bois de fléche (sage orange), two strips of rubber, usually from discarded inner tubes, and a small piece of leather. Many children became very skillful with a slingshot and were able to hunt birds with them. A single-armed slingshot, called a bayonette, was also popular. It was used to hurl specially carved pieces of cypress bardeaux (shingles). Contests were held to see who was able to fling these pieces farthest. Caniques (marbles), were also made of terre grasse by hand. Some marbles improvised from small balls of tightly rolled, hard-tanned leather. Store bought marbles like stouns (agates) and aciers (steels) were considered luxuries and were sometimes given as special presents to children after selling the annual crop. Traditional marble games were called grand rond and rond fait.

Some games required specialized equipment which was bought in stores or from commis voyageurs, or travelling salesmen, if the families could afford it. If not, children often made or improvised

equipment at home with available materials. Baseball was popular, and bats were sometimes made of old broom or hoe handles or from whittled bois d'arc, or sage orange branches. Balls were often improvised as well: cotton seeds, corn husks, and pieces of leather covered with leather or stuffed into a sock, or a ball of tightly-wound string or leather.

A cross between golf and field hockey was called la vieille truie or Bibi, la truie. This could be played with two teams or two persons. Each side tried to put its ball into the other side's hole (called "faire boire la vieille truie") by hitting it with sticks, while trying to prevent the other side from putting its ball into its own hole. Often these balls were actually small tomato cans. Opponents could hit the ball or can hard to send it as far as possible from his/her own hole.

Balls were also used in games like Tant qu'elle est chaude, essentially a version of dodge ball in which a leader rolled a small ball toward a line of three-inch holes. Each hole represented one player. When the ball went into a hole, it became "hot" upon which the player whose hole this was took the ball and threw it at the other players. Any player who was hit with the ball while it was hot was then eliminated. The ball "cooled" when it hit a predetermined number of players. The last player in the game was the winner. Another version of this game played with sticks was la pelote dans le trou.

Still another version of dodge ball was called La pelote quatre buts. Four players stood one on each of four bases, arranged in a square about 40' or 50' apart, and tossed a ball to each other. Other

players stood in the square. If a player caught the ball, he/she was allowed to throw it at the ones in the middle. If a player was hit, he/she was out. If a player on a base dropped the ball when it was tossed, he/she changed places with one of the players in the middle.

A game called batons was played with pointed sticks about two to three feet long. The first player started the game by sticking his stick as hard as he/she could into the ground by throwing it. Additional players tried to cause this and other players' sticks to fall by sticking their own sticks into the ground and hitting another stick at the same time. A stick which fell on its own or was not successfully stuck into the ground had only to be audibly nicked by another player. In the event that a player nicked a fallen stick or knocked a standing stick down, he then hit the fallen stick as far away as he could with his own and then attempted to stick his stick into the ground three times before the other player reached his stick and stuck it into the ground once. The player failing to fulfill his obligation was eliminated. The last remaining player was declared the winner.

Playing with homemade toys was also popular. Makeshift cars were fashioned out of household debris like sticks and shingles, cans and cartons. Sometimes other children or household pets were pressed into service to push these around while children took turns driving, often through obstacles. Some toys involved using available objects or discarded materials, like pushing an old wheel with a stick, or making darts by sticking loose chicken feathers into the quick of a broken corn cob. Cerfs-volants (kites) were made with thin strips of wood, paper and strips of discarded rags. Dolls were often homemade of rags

stuffed with cotton, or corn shucks. Corn silk was popular as doll hair. Stilts and wooden horses were made of discarded lumber.

Some games served as informal rites of passage and tests of individual physical strength and ability, like foot racing, arm wrestling and boxing. In the early part of the twentieth century, boxing teams were organized by many south Louisiana towns.

Demonstrating skill on horse back was important on the prairie and provided the basis for lots of contests. Formal horse racing is very popular in south Louisiana and grew out of informal horse races often held on country roads, on the way home from a visit, a dance or Sunday Mass simply to prove who was the best rider and had the fastest horse in the neighborhood. Horsemanship was also demonstrated in horseshows made up of rodeo-like events (barrel and pole racing, cutting, pleasure, etc.) One horse show event, the barrel pickup was supposedly developed among the Cajuns in Louisiana. This is a timed event in which a rider starts at one end of the arena, goes around a barrel on the other end, picking up his/her partner who is standing on the barrel, and both return as fast as possible.

A related event, which was developed recently out of fakelore sources, but which has not begun to enter popular tradition, is the annual tournoi in Ville Platte. Horsemen, dressed in costumes designed to imitate medieval garb, ride as fast as they can in a circle trying to lance rings hanging from posts around the circle. The one who captures the most rings in the least amount of time is declared the winner.

In the bayou areas, there were corresponding races to demonstrate ability on the water: swimming races and boating races. Pirogues, a south Louisiana version of the canoe, were especially popular in racing events because of the delicate balance required to stay afloat in them. Another popular event involved two people standing on opposite ends of a pirogue, each trying to cause the other to fall into the water without falling him/herself.

Pistol and rifle shooting matches, called pategaux, provided opportunities to demonstrate skill in shooting firearms. The traditional prize for winning a pategau was a large fowl such as a goose or a turkey. Often the target was a symbolic goose or turkey. The object of the match was to determine who could put the most bullets into a hanging target also called the pategau, within a limited amount of rounds or time. Another contest involved cutting the string from which the pategau was hung. There were also contests which tested knife handling skills. Target throwing onto a wall or tree, or on the ground. Chew the Peg was a game which involved a complex sequential sticking ritual. If a player accomplished the sequence without failing to stick his/her knife, he/she drove a wooden peg into the ground and his/her opponent had to pull it out with his/her teeth.

Whittling was also a popular form of entertainment which demonstrated skills with knives.

GAMING

Gaming or gambling sports have traditionally been popular with many adult Cajuns and one of the most popular was card playing. Many small villages and towns historically had at least one casino where men

and women gathered to play a variety of card games. Some of the most popular were bourré, poker, euchre, and casino. These games usually involved gambling for money, long considered legal as long as the house did not officially take a cut. "Friendly" games were also played for tokens like pecans, buttons or matches. Couples sometimes played point games like rook, hearts, spades or bridge after supper at social gatherings.

Other popular table sports include dominos, checkers, pool and billiards. These were often located in bars or taverns where men gathered and were often accompanied by the consumption of alcohol.

A popular form of adult gaming was horse racing. It seemed only natural for people who depended on horses for everyday travel to want to prove who had the fastest horse. Informal races often occured on country roads on the way home from Saturday night dances or Sunday masses. All it took was a boast about how fast one's horse was; if someone within ear-shot thought differently, the race was on, sometimes in the family buggy, other times on horseback--first one to the big oak tree or the corner wins. Even long before the development of pari-mutuel tracks like Jefferson Downs in New Orleans and Evangeline Downs in Lafayette, bush tracks dotted the prairies of south Louisiana. Betting there was between interested parties. The tracks usually featured short, fast races between two quarter horses running on straight dirt tracks bordered by rails to prevent the horses from interfering with each other. There was little strategy involved. The goal was simply to get a quick start and run as fast as possible. In the days before mechanical gates, races were started by dropping a

handerkerchief or a rope. Jockeys were frequently light young boys who learned early how to hang on to their bolting mounts by grabbing a handful of mane. Though there were tracks in many settlements, perhaps one of the most popular of these bush tracks was Chez petit Maurice, located near Bosco behind a well-known dance hall of the same name owned by Ellis Richard. Automobiles as well as horses raced on this track.

Other adult games which involved animals were cock fighting and dog fighting, with roots in both European and Afro-Caribbean culture. Cock fighting was always quasi-legal at best. Dog fighting has long been looked down upon by society and the law, but has nevertheless been done clandestinely. Both are gambling events. In both the winner is declared when one animal can no longer respond to pit, the call to fight, because of lost interest, injury or death. The breeding, training and pitting of roosters and dogs are recognized skills among devotées.

Cock fighting is done primarily between male poultry or roosters, but can be done between hens as well. Defenders of the sport insist they are only providing a forum for what happens naturally in the barnyard. The categories of cock fighting are named according to the presence or lack of artificial spurs attached to the legs of the poultry: natural, spurs, gaffes, blades.

Dog fighting is done primarily between males of a breed called pit bulls, although fights can be arranged between females of this same breed. Pit bulls are bred for their agressiveness and fighting ability. Few other species compete with pit bulls. They usually only challenge

other dogs, but have been known to attack humans and other animals.

Many Cajuns love games of chance so much that they will wager on just about anything: whether a branch will fall on the sidewalk or in the street, whether a spouse will wear a red or blue shirt, anything. One of the most popular betting grounds, however, is politics. Some have been known to bet huge sums on the outcome of a political race. Yet some of these same bettors would think it ridiculous if asked to contribute to a political campaign.

OTE VOIR TA SACREE SOUTANE

Anti-clerical Humor in French Louisiana

Barry Jean Ancelet

Though devoutly Catholic, Cajuns and Creoles have also been traditionally anti-clerical. According to Carl Brasseaux, this sentiment thrived on the frontier in New France where the coureurs de bois openly defied missionary efforts and even actively campaigned "to discredit the missionaries in the eyes of their potential Indian converts, thereby extinguishing the religious threat to their way of life" (Brasseaux, p. 29). Among other things, missionaries were hell-bent on preventing the early colonials from engaging in sexual relations with Indian women, a very unpopular stand since European women were rare on the early colonial frontier. Brasseaux also notes "a remarkable lack of enthusiasm among the colonists for church construction," a church finally built in New Orleans fully nine years after the founding of the post, long after the construction of "numerous cabarets and billiard halls" (pp. 34-35). Few attended services once there were churches, prompting Father Raphael to complain in a letter to Abbé Raguet, in 1725, that there was "no difference between the holy days of obligation and Sundays and work days, between Lent and Carnival, [between] the Easter season and the rest of the year" (quoted in Brasseaux, p. 35).

In colonial Louisiana, anti-clerical attitudes were also inspired at least in part by the dubious reputation of the clergy on hand. As Brasseaux points out, "Louisiana's vicar general acknowledged, in 1725,

that many priests sent to Louisiana had been 'interdicted in their [respective French] dioceses and fled to Louisiana to avoid punishment for their disorderly lives,'" vividly illustrated with the case of the illegitimate child "sired by Father St. Cosme and Father Beaubois's attempts to seduce Governor Etiênne Perier's pretty French-born domestique in the confessional" (p. 34).

Frontier attitudes were later reinforced by sentiments imported from 18th century France where revolutions and reforms separated church and state and gave rise to irreverent humor which survives in Louisiana French oral tradition, particularly in the treatment of the clergy as a continuation of the colonial mentality, further underscoring traditional attitudes concerning the church and its contemporary missionaries. Much in the way that the oil industry has allowed for the continuation of the frontier spirit with its adventure-laden routine, the continuing presence of missionaries in present-day Louisiana has preserved the anti-clerical attitudes they have long engendered. As late as 1970, the vast majority of parish priests in south Louisiana were French, Belgian, French-Canadian or Irish missionaries. The vicar of the predominately Catholic Diocese of Lafayette complained in 1978 that the per capita rate of vocations in French Louisiana was only one-fourth that of the predominately protestant Savannah area.

In Louisiana, stories about the church and its clergy do not take on all of religion, as they do in France and Quebec where the demise of the theocracy brought the whole system down with it. The questionable moral character of many colonial priests, along with their ill-concealed colonial mission of bringing "civilization" to an

ostensibly backward people, brought about a demystification of the frock and a spirit of rebellion among the flock. This attitude is concisely expressed in an expression traditionally used to call the question during an argument, "Ote-voir ta sacre' soutane et je vas te montrer quelle sorte d'homme que t'es!" (Take off that damn cassock and I'll show you what kind of man you are!) This principle is related to the infallability of the Pope. As long as a priest speaks in church about religious matters, things go relatively well. However, as soon as he begins to speak on social matters, he is expected to leave his cassock in church. A parish priest who tried to convince a local bar owner to discontinue his bourré and poker games was told flatly, "Listen, father, you stick to bingo and I won't say Mass."

The expression, "Est-ce que t'as jamais vu un pre^tre maigre?" (Have you ever seen a skinny priest?) further demonstrates the perception among the Cajuns that members of the clergy are "bons vivants" who do not always defer their gratification to the next life. A traditional response to the greeting, "Comment ça va?" (How's it going?), is "Mieux que ça et les prêtres seraient jaloux" (Any better and the priests would be jealous), alluding to the perceived wealth and comfort of the clergy (see Brasseaux, p. 34), an ongoing feeling which has considerable historical precedant going back at least to the Jesuits' immense land and slave holdings during the colonial period.

Stories from colonial Louisiana like that of the officers who stormed the church when relegated to the balcony by the priest and that of the disturbance caused by Attorney General and Mrs. Fleuriau and the wife of Superior Council member Perry who openly berated Father Raphael

when he chided them for disturbing his sermon with their tittering illustrate well the difficulty colonial priests had in controlling and influencing their parishioners (Brasseaux, pp. 35-36). Similar stories persist in contemporary oral tradition. Cajuns delight in relating quite unsolicited accounts which reflect the survival of colonial attitudes. The oral history of Vermilion parish includes stories about a pastor in 19th century Abbeville who was involved in a high-noon style main-street gunfight.(1) Descriptions of the first church service in Cankton, on the edge of the Marais-bouleur in St. Landry parish, an area renouned for its toughness, shows that things had changed little by the 1920s. According to these accounts, the arrival of the church was unpopular among the area ruffians who considered such forms of socialization a threat to their way of life, paralleling the sentiments of the early coureur de bois. During the dedication of the church, several men rode into the building on horseback, shooting out the kerosene lamps and scattering the women in attendance, all in fine frontier style. They are said to have been severely dealt with by an even tougher parish priest. In the wild-western tradition of pinning badges on the best gunfighters to channel their energies on the side of the law, the bishop had foreseen the difficulty of the situation and sent Père Danduron, a Quebecker who was as reputed for his physical prowess as for his religious conviction.(2)

Despite regular admonishments from parish priests, bare-knuckle duels continued to be set just after Sunday mass well into the 1950s. Gambling and cock-fighting survived the prohibitions of colonial and contemporary authorities alike and thrive to this very day.(3) Even as

late as the mid-1960s, church services continued to be disrupted by the laughter of the men who preferred to stand outside the church door to smoke and tell jokes instead of going inside to hear mass. Folktales in current Louisiana French oral literature also reflect such irreverent disruptions. One example describes a nearly deaf parishioner who visits his parish priest to have an announcement made concerning a cow he has lost. He carefully explains to the priest that she should be easy to recognize since she is afflicted with a hollow horn and a spoiled teat. After his homily, the priest began his announcements with the bans of marriage. "There is the promise of marriage between Jean Broussard, son of Mr. and Mrs. Auguste Broussard, and Annette Cormier, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Pierre Cormier..." Just then, the parishioner stood up to remind the priest, "Don't forget to tell them that she has a hollow horn and one spoiled teat!"(4)

Devout and practicing Catholic storytellers often spice their sessions with a few jokes about the clergy and religious orders. Priests in jokes get little more respect than did Father Raphael in colonial New Orleans. The following story about the priest who died when his head was "turned straight," is as full of indirect disdain for the role of the priest as it is of naive humor.

One day, a country priest was on his way to say mass in the next town, and he didn't have a car. He had a long way to go, so he tried to thumb a ride, but no one would pick him up. Finally, a fellow on a motorcycle stopped and offered him a ride. The priest wasn't too sure. "I don't know," he said. "It's kind of cold to be riding on a motorcycle." The fellow said, "Well, just turn your jacket around to

break the wind and you'll be okay." The priest had a long way to go, so he decided to take a chance. He turned his jacket around and they took off down the road.

A few miles later, they skidded off the road and into a ditch. By the time the police and ambulances arrived, a considerable crowd had already gathered. The authorities went down into the ditch to check the situation out. "What happened?" they asked. "Well," someone answered, "these two guys on this motorcycle had a bit of an accident. That fellow over there with the helmet, it looks like he's going to make it, but that one over there with the black coat, I'm not sure. His head was turned completely around. We turned it back, but I think we lost him anyway."(5)

In the title expression, "Ote voir ta sacre' soutane et je vas te montrer quel sorte d'homme que t'es," the cassock is rejected as an improper cover in man-to-man dealings. Here, taken at face value, it falsely defines the man and becomes the indirect cause of the priest's undoing.

Other stories directly confront the priest with irreverent retorts. One tells of a priest who told his congregation that if they prayed hard enough and gave enough money, they would one day see the Virgin Mary. After several years, he sensed that his congregation was getting restless, so he arranged for a young lady from a distant town to dress like the Virgin and descend on a swing through a trapdoor in the church ceiling. That Sunday, he gave the signal, saying, "Lift up your eyes and see the Virgin." As the maiden came through the trapdoor, a nail caught the bottom of her dress and lifted her dress as she

descended, exposing her to the entire congregation. When the priest saw this, he said, "Lower your eyes or you will lose them." An elderly man in the back covered one eye and retorted, "Hell, at my age, I think I'll risk one."(6) Another tells of a priest and a baptist minister debating theology while walking in the country when they see a child playing in the middle of the road. As they get closer, they notice that the child is playing in a pile of dung. The priest asks him what he is doing. The child responds that he is making a statue of a baptist minister. The priest asks why not a catholic priest. The child snaps, "Because I don't have enough dung."(7) Another story has the priest admonishing his parishioners. "Don't you know that Christ died for you?" bellows the priest. From the back of church comes, "Hell, we didn't even know he was sick."(8)

Another of the problems which faced colonial priests involved their perceived lack of morals, fueled by such exploits as those of Father St. Cosme and Father Beaubois to which I alluded earlier. Indeed, many of the stories about the immorality of the clergy are set in the confessional(9) and involve an unexpected reaction from the priest with which he inadvertently exposes his dubious morals, such as the one about the man who came to confession to say that he had held his fiancee's hand. The priest pointed out that this was no sin, "Is that all you did?" "No," the man replied, "I kissed her a bit." "That also is not a sin," said the priest. "Is that all you did?" "No," admitted the man, "we took all our clothes off and lay together on the bed." "Now you're getting close," said the priest. "Is that all you did?" "Yes," said the man, "that's all I did." "You're sure that's all

you did?" insisted the priest. "Yes," said the man. "Well, in that case," said the priest, "for your penance, I want you to eat a bale of hay." "A bale of hay? But, Father, I'm not a horse," protested the man. "No," replied the priest, "but, if that's all you did, then you're just as stupid."(10) Another example has the priest confessing a man who admits to having had extra-marital relations with a certain woman. The priest insists that he must reveal her identity as part of his atonement. Later, the man discovers the priest in bed with the woman. He eventually goes back to confession to admit to having stolen a dozen eggs. When the priest asks where the eggs are now, the man retorts, "Oh, no, you fooled me with the woman. I'll be damned if you'll get the eggs."(11) In addition to the obvious sexual reference, the attitude implied here, that rich priests bleed their already poor parishioners, was prevalent in colonial Louisiana and the perception persists. Built-in rituals like drinking wine out of golden chalices studded with jewels in the performance of their duties has done little to exonerate priests in the public mind over the years.

Tales about the sexual activity of priests are not restricted to the confessional setting. One example concerns a priest visiting the home of a friend to care for his wife while his friend is away on a trip. The man hides the forks under the sheets of the visitor's bed. When the man returns, the priest exposes his seduction of the man's wife when he reports that all went well except for the strange loss of all the forks in the house.(12) Another example tells of a young man who is caught in dilemma. The mother of his girlfriend will not consent to a wedding before verifying his physical endowment. He claims

embarassment, but also fears that he will not stand up to the test. He confides his predicament to the local priest who offers to stand in for the young man. The boy explains that he is embarassed to show his face during such a trial and arrangements are made to conceal the priest's identity. On the appointed day, the two hide in the attic. The priest exposes the part in question through a knot hole in the ceiling and the boy speaks to mother and daughter. The mother whispers her approval, but tells her daughter that she would like to share this wonderful experience with her own mother. Grandmother is ushered in and told to look up, to which she exclaims, "Well, what in the world is Father LeBlanc doing in the attic?"(13)

Sometimes, sexual activity is more subtly implied, as in the story of the two beggars who meet near the end of a road. One tells the other that it is of no use to continue to the last house because they are Catholic fanatics. The beggar continues anyway, armed with a plan. When the couple asks if he is Catholic, he exclaims, "Purebred! My father was a priest and my mother a nun."(14) Nuns are also considered fair game in oral tradition. Another story, has two French nuns arrive in New Orleans to visit America. Wishing to immerse themselves in the American experience as soon as possible, they stop for a hamburger at the first opportunity, explaining their motives to the waiter who apologizes that he is fresh out of hamburgers, but can offer hot dogs instead, which are just as American. They don't know about hot dogs but finally agree. When the first nun receives her hot dog, she opens it and just as quickly closes it. After a minute, the other nun says, "You're not eating your hot dog. Is it not good?" "No," she replies,

"it's not that. I just wanted to wait to see what part of the dog you got."(15) Of the two interpretations possible here, one has to do with a play on the ignorance associated with celibacy. The other implies a preoccupation with sexual connotations, even more explicit in a similar story about the two nuns who go the market to buy themselves each a banana. The vendor tells them that they are ten cents apiece but that they can get three for a quarter. One nun tells the other, "Let's go ahead and get three. We can always eat the other one."(16)

Members of the clergy fare no better on the steps of the Pearly Gates. One tale, told to me by a Cajun priest, has a priest arrive at the Gates of Heaven only to be told that he must first atone for his cussing on earth by climbing a ladder and marking his sins on the way up with a piece of chalk. He starts climbing and counting. After what seemed an eternity, he heard someone above him on the same ladder asking him to move over so that he might pass on his way down. As they crossed, he recognize his former monseigneur who had died earlier. He took heart that he must be nearing the top, but his hopes were dashed when the other priest explained that he was simply descending for more chalk.(17)

Folk tales, legends and oral history are stylized reflections of a symbolic past. However, they often accurately reflect psychological truth. The way people feel about their past and the kinds of things they think are funny can help color the picture drawn by the facts. The abundance of anti-clerical humor in Cajun culture would seem to debunk the pastoral image of the Acadians as the tame and devoted flock of the local <u>curé</u> popularized by Longfellow's "Evangeline." The

independence expressed in the Cajuns' anti-clerical oral literature is based on the notion that priests and nuns are unnecessary mediators in the direct relationship they enjoy with their Diety. In their own stories, the Cajuns clearly believe in God, but in their own terms and not without a keen sense of humor. They are also motivated by an indisputable sense of frontier justice in which priests and nuns are tolerated as long as they stay out of the line of fire. God's representatives are respected as long as they are officially representing God. When they begin representing their own interests, they must compete on the same level as everyone else. Thus, while religion itself is almost never questioned in Louisiana French oral tradition, members of the religious community are the butts of countless jokes, many of which are based on an enduring resistance to colonial attitudes as well as on persistent popular perceptions of the irrepressible human element of priests and nuns.

FOOTNOTES

(1) From an interview with Carl Brasseaux, March, 1984.

(2) From numerous oral history accounts recorded by BJA.

(3) The last bare-knuckle Sunday duel I remember seeing was in 1959, behind the neighborhood grocery store. Colonial authorities made numerous unsuccessful attempts to eliminate gambling in eighteenth century New Orleans. More recently, the Louisiana State Legislature recently went on record (reluctantly) to declare cock-fighting "not illegal." Local bourré and poker games are left unmolested "as long as the house does not officially take a cut."

(4) Told by Burke Guillory, translated from the French; field recording by BJA; AT type 1832L A Woman Orders a Mass to Be Said for her Stolen Ox (for all tale type references, see Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, The Types of the Folk-Tale: A Classification and Bibliography, Folklore Fellows Communications, 184 (rev. Helsinki, 1961).

(5) Told by Claude Landry, translated from the French; field recording by Barry Jean Ancelet; motif J1942 "Inappropriate medical treatment due to ignorance" (for all motif references, see Stith Thompson, Motif-Index of Folk-Literature, Folklore Fellows Communications, 106-109, 116, 117 (Helsinki, 1932-1936; rev. Bloomington, 1955-1958).

(6) Told by Rick Dugas; field interview by BJA; AT type 1839*, Making Thunder.

(7) Told by Burke Guillory, translated from the French; field recording by BJA; cf. AT type 1832B* What Kind of Dung?

(8) Told by Revon Reed, translated from the French; field recording by BJA.

(9) Cf. AT types 1800-1809 Jokes Concerning the Confessional.

(10) Told by Burke Guillory, translated from the French; field recording by BJA.

(11) Told by Bob Mayer; field interview by BJA.

(12) Told by Adley Gaudet, translated from the French; field recording by BJA.

(13) Told by Fred Tate, translated from the French; field recording by BJA.

(14) Told by Lazard Daigle, translated from the French; field recording by BJA; Thompson motif J2461.2, "Instructions concerning greetings are followed literally."

(15) Told by Elizabeth Landreneau, translated from the French; field recording by BJA; AT type 1339 Fool Doesn't Know Sausage.

(16) Told by Stanislaus Faul, translated from the French; field recording by BJA.

(17) Told by Father Calais; field interview by BJA; AT type 1738C* Chalk Marks on Heaven's Stairs.

THE CAJUN WHO WENT TO HARVARD:

IDENTITY IN THE ORAL LITERATURE OF SOUTH LOUISIANA

Barry Jean Ancelet

> A young Cajun went to school at Harvard. He didn't know his way around, so he asked directions of somebody on the street. "Where's the library at?" he asked. "You must be new at this institution," the other fellow said with a very proper Ivy League accent. "One never ends a question with a preposition." "Excuse me," the Cajun said. "Where's the library at, asshole?" (Rick Dugas 1982)*

Recently, this joke began making the rounds in South Louisiana. It is not a new joke, nor is it specifically about the Cajuns. It has been used in reference to Aggies, Okies, hillbillys, and Southerners attending the same institution in question with identical results. But its appearance in the Cajun repertoire raises some interesting questions about the Cajuns and how their culture is doing these days.

Jokes are funny. They are also very serious. You can tell a lot about people by what they think is funny. We are usually most ticklish in our most sensitive spots. Touch lightly and it makes us chuckle. Touch too hard and it makes us uncomfortable. Sometimes there is a very fine line between laughing and crying, and humor functions only when it has one foot in reality. Jokes are rarely new. There is an international repertoire of funny stories which has been around for centuries and reflects the range of human experience. Old jokes are adapted to reflect the most current events almost immediately. (Remember, for example, the sudden rash of recycled "Polack" and Catholic jokes when John Paul II was elected pontiff, or consider the surge of adapted homosexual jokes with the news of Rock Hudson's illness.)

Since the 1960s, Louisiana French culture and its image have undergone profound changes. Today Cajunism is generally considered to be fashionable and this social rehabilitation is reflected in much of the contemporary oral repertoire, sometimes aggressively, as in the story quoted above. Yet, this was not always the case. In the 19th century, Cajun culture was a blend of ethnic traditions thriving in a self-sufficient community. The bulk of traditional stories has always reflected the view from the inside. Within the borders of their own context, Cajuns have never been afraid to laugh at their own foibles. Stories abound about the smallish but clever Cajun who wisely avoids direct confrontations when the odds are obviously stacked against him, in the tradition of the French rascal Renard and of Lapin, his Afro-Caribbean counterpart.

> Two brothers went to the dancehall. The one who liked to drink went to the bar and the other who liked to dance went to the floor. A while later, someone came to the one at the bar and told him that he should come and see about his brother, that someone had flattened him in a fight. Full of liquid courage, he stormed off to the dance floor and saw his brother laying there unconscious and covered with bruises. He waved his arms to stop the musicians and stood on a table to announce, "If the man who did this has enough nerve to show his face, I have something to tell him." A huge man came out of the crowd and said, "I did this. What do you have to say?" He replied, "Boy, you must have a hell of an uppercut." (Elmo Ancelet 1979; told in French; my translation)

Jokes sometimes unconsciously reflect presumptions about the way things are. Exiled from Acadia (now Nova Scotia) by the English in 1755, the Cajuns made their way to Louisiana where they insulated themselves by living in isolation. Even today, visitors can still find it difficult to penetrate their world.

> A stranger stopped at an old house for directions. "Where's Joe Babineaux's house?" he asked. An old fellow told him,

"Well, you go down to Marius Thibodeaux's land and take a left. Then go on until where that old oak tree got blown down in the storm of '42 and take a right. And it's going to be on your left across the road from where Rhule Cormier was killed in that fight." "Wait a minute," the stranger complained, "if I knew where all those places were, I wouldn't need directions." "If you need directions, maybe you don't have any business there," the old fellow shot back. (Stanislaus Paul 1982; told in French; my translation)

A careful look at even the most ordinary jokes will usually expose new layers of meaning under the surface. Consider, for example, the following story.

There once was an old maid who wanted to get married. And she was having no luck. So, she went to ask the advice of her grandmother. Her grandmother told her, "If you were to pray every night at the foot of an oak tree, maybe your prayers would be answered." So, the old maid went out to pray...and pray. There was no response to her prayer. So, one night, she said, "I'm going to pray with more fervor!" She got on her knees, put her head against the oak. "My God," she cried, "please do me the favor of letting me marry." There was an old owl who called out, "Hoo, hoo." "Ah," she said, "great God! Just as long as it's a man. Send him along to me right away!" (Clotile Richard 1975; told in French; my translation)

This joke was told to me by a safely married elderly lady with a gleam in her eyes. I found it funny, but a little awkward since it was told in French but played on the confusion between the owl's hoot and the English "Who?" I didn't pay much more attention to it until later, when it occurred to me that this joke was an interesting, unconscious reflection of the South Louisiana cultural scene. Mrs. Richard had likely heard the joke first in English, but chose to tell it to me in her native French. The owl could have easily been replaced by a smaller bird like the kildeer whose cry of "Kee kee" could have been mistaken for the French Qui? The Mrs. Richard, however, was not at all surprised that God should speak English. In her real world, people in authority usually did. She knew, however, that He also spoke French. The old maid

in her story acted as Mrs. Richard did with her own grandchildren, addressing Him in French and responding in French though He answered in English.

Looking for variants of this last tale, I found quite similar stories in Quebec and New Brunswick, with interesting reflections of their own cultural scenes. In Quebec, the old maid is counseled to pray at the foot of St. Joseph's statue. When she does, a young prankster hidden behind the statue overhears her and answers, "Tu l'auras pas, ton mari." ("You won't get a husband.") The old maid is so surprised to hear the statue "talk" that she jumps on it, throwing her arms around its neck. This causes the statue to fall on her to which she exclaims, "Débarque donc, St. Joseph. T'es pire qu'un jeune!" ("Get off, St. Joseph. You're worse than the boys!") Her reaction, which might sound somewhat blasphemous, is perfectly in keeping with the prevailing anti-clericalism of the Quebecois, whose rebelliousness against the theocracy of their past makes the mere mention of religious trappings (tabernacle, hostie, baptême calice) good cussing.

In New Brunswick, where many Acadians remained in hiding after their 1755 exile from Nova Scotia, and where the French community (about 40% of the population) continues to be dominated by the English (about 60%), the old maid is told to pray outside to the Virgin Mary (Our Lady of the Assumption is the patroness of the Acadians). Unlike her Louisiana counterpart, the spinster from New Brunswick is embarassed and goes into the chicken coop. Just as she is lifting her head in prayer, chicken droppings fall into her mouth, to which she

responds, "Bonne Ste. Vierge! J'ai r'çu de tes grâces, b'en c'est amer!" (Holy Virgin, I have received your graces, but how terribly bitter!") Her stoic acceptance of bitter humiliation from above reflects the Acadians' long history of oppression.

Jokes in the Canadian Maritimes English community often reflect the situation described in the old maid joke quoted above from the other side of the fence. On a plane from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Moncton, New Brunswick, an English Canadian, obviously unaware of my cultural origins, made me shudder with a doubly racist riddle: Why does America have niggers and Canada have frogs (French Canadians)? Because America had first choice.

Jokes within a culture are one thing. So-called ethnic jokes, which pit one culture against another, are quite another. Within Cajun culture, foolishness typically provides ample grounds for jokes.

> Boudreaux took Touchet fishing one day in his new boat. They had been out only a few minutes when the motor fell into the water. Boudreaux jumped in after it, and Touchet leaned over to see his partner trying to start the motor under water. He watched him for a while, shaking his head, and finally blurted out, "Pull your choke, stupid!" (Elmo Ancelet 1979; told in French; my translation)

In the intercultural context, foolishness often becomes the uncomfortable fuel for bitter ethnic "us versus them" confrontations:

> "The only thing more dangerous than a nigger with a knife is a Cajun with a pencil." (Overheard in a bar, ca. 1976)

The discovery of oil on the Louisiana prairies in 1900, the mandatory English education act of 1916, the World War I draft, mass media and modern transportation combined to Americanize the Cajuns at breakneck speed during the 1930s and 1940s. Scholarly records of

stories during this time include Alcée Fortier's collection of Creole animal tales and Corinne Saucier's collection of Avoyelles Parish fairy tales, neither of which were recorded among the Cajuns. The oldest extant recordings of Cajun humor are Walter Coquille's stories about the "Mayor of Bayou Pom Pom," (pronounced "mare" as in "How you call that female horse?") which already reflected social changes: they were told in Cajun English dialect as well as French and poked fun at the Cajuns confronted for the first time with modern ways. Eventually, however, a social stigma came to be attached to humor at the expense of the Cajuns. Even the upwardly mobile were brought tumbling down with such remarks as "A Cajun is just like a monkey; the higher up he climbs, the more of his ass you see," reflecting the Cajuns' precarious position on the new social ladder.

A basic assumption of ethnic jokes about the Cajuns was that they were impossible to educate. Most Cajuns had never been to school until the 1916 mandatory education act began to bring them into the classroom. Then, their inability to speak English made them appear dull and recalcitrant. The following joke describes a typical first day of school for most young Cajuns who found themselves forbidden to speak their native language on the schoolgrounds.

> My father sent me to school in the first grade and I came home after only twenty minutes. When my father asked me why I wasn't in school, I told him, "I came home because that's all there was. The teacher said everybody had to talk only English. There were a few who understood, but most of us didn't know what she was saying. Then she said something about numbers and said, 'Say one.' A few people around the classroom said, 'One.' Then she said, 'Say two.' So we all got up and left." (Larrell Richard 1977; told in French, my translation)

The punch line, based on the confusion between the bilingual homonyms "Say two" and "C'est tout" ("That's all"), plays on the assumed eagerness of the Cajuns to be rid of schooling as soon as possible and reflects the functional bilingualism which eventually resulted from the educational system. The next story further shows the assumed incompatibility of schools and Cajun culture.

> Two cousins started school together. The teacher was asking everybody their names. When she got to the first cousin, he said, "Poo Poo." She said she was not going to put up with such behavior and asked him again. "Poo Poo," he said again. So she sent him out of the classroom. As he walked past his cousin, he said, "Come on, Ca Ca, she won't believe you either." (Larrell Richard 1977)

This joke plays on the teacher's ignorance of the Cajun nicknaming traditions, but beyond that, represents the school context as a cultural playground for the cousins who clearly have no real interest in learning.

Even when jokes have Cajuns staying in school, their resistance to education persists. Not a native French-speaking Cajun himself, Justin Wilson specializes in ethnic jokes which exploit the misunderstandings that arise from the Cajuns' difficulty with English.

> You know, lady an' gentlemans, I got a frien' an' he got a li'l boy chirren an' one day las' year he brought hisse'f home from school an' he say, "Pa-pa, I got a problem." Pa-pa say, "Well, we all got problem, son." "But you jus' don't unnerstan', pa-pa. I got 12 problem." Pa-pa say, "W'at you meant by dat?" He say, "Rit-ma tick. I got 12 problem r'at chere. De teacher done tole me dat she want to fine the common denominator for averyone dem twelve problem." His pa-pa say, "Whoo! You all still lookin' fo' dat damm t'ing? We was lookin' fo' dat w'en I was a boy." (Wilson and Howard Jacobs, Justin Wilson's Cajun Humor, Gretna 1974)

The story line which stresses the persistent problem in educating Cajuns is underscored by the storyteller's imitation of the language.

Though these stories are often recycled ethnic jokes told at the expense of the Cajuns, many in South Louisiana find them funny and retell them. In another story (Wilson & Jacobs 1974), Wilson tells of a "real astute broker" who is showing a house in New Orleans to a newly-rich Cajun woman.

> ...an' w'en dey move out de bedroom he say, "Now dis is de playroom an' den." She cass bot' eye on him r'at now an' she make spoke to dat real astute agent, "An' den WHUT?"

In Wilson's stories, the Cajuns' language troubles are not limited to English. Even when confronted with "good Franch," Wilson's Cajuns find themselves baffled.

> Dis young lady from New Or-lee-anh study dat good Franch at dem Too-lane University, an' one mornin' she was squat in a dock blin' in Sout'wes' Lewisana an' she say to her Cajun guide like dis: "Quelle heure est-il?" De guide scratch his head an' he say, "Lady, dem wasn't teal, dem was mallard." (Wilson & Jacobs 1974)

In a similar story (Wilson & Jacobs 1974), a young man dining at Antoine's tells the "waitin' faller," "Donnez-moi l'addition, s'il vous plait," only to be given discreet directions to the restroom. These stories reflect the attitude common among the Cajuns that their language is nothing more than a patois, unintelligible to speakers of "good" French. They invariably explain, usually in English, to visitors from other French-speaking countries, "We don't speak real French, just broken-down Cajun French."

Signs and books in standard English presented additional problems to the Cajun stereotype who is barely literate, at best. For example,

> Did you hear about the Cajun who was on his way to Houston? He saw a sign in Lake Charles, "Do not pass on bridge," so he turned around and went home. (Rick Dugas 1980)

Or,

> A Cajun was on his way to Baton Rouge to visit his daughter who was away at college. He saw a sign, "LSU left," so he turned around and went home. (Rick Dugas 1980)

Given his history of illiteracy, a Cajun's visit to the library was considered an unlikely event with humorous possibilities, as in the story about Melançon who comes to the library asking for Das Kapital (Wilson & Jacobs 1974) The "liberry lady" is naturally surprised at his interest in such a "complicate book." He insists, "Dey said it was all about my wife's relatives name Bourgeois."

Even their now-celebrated cuisine once gave Cajuns trouble:

> A Cajun boy went to school at LSU and he was very concerned about hiding his origins. He paid attention to the way he dressed and the way he spoke and everything. One day he decides to go out to eat at McDonald's. He checks to make sure he has left his boots at home, then he goes in and says carefully, "I would like a hamburger, please." The waiter says, "You want that all the way?" "Hell, no! Hold the rice," he says. "What you think I am, a Cajun?" (Alex Giroir 1984)

Or,

> A crawfish went walking with her children one day. They saw a bull and the little crawfish asked, "What's that?" "No need to be afraid," said the mother crawfish. "That's a bull. It eats grass and hay and things like that." They walked on and saw a pig. "What's that?" asked the little crawfish. "That's a pig. It eats corn and bran and things like that." Then they saw a man dressed in a suit. "What's that?" they asked again. "That's an American. He eats bulls and pigs and things like that." Then they saw a man dressed in overalls and hip boots. "What's that?" they asked. "Run like hell, children. That's a Cajun and he'll eat any damn thing!" (Larrell Richard 1979)

The Cajuns' inability to conform to modern conventions is often presented through a confrontation with their Anglo-American neighbors, especially Texans who have long had a reputation in American jokelore for their fierce pride and boasts about the size and excellence of

everything Texan. The influence of Texas was overwhelming during the 1930s and 1940s when Cajuns were becoming Americanized. Even Cajun musicians abandoned traditional styles to imitate Bob Wills' western swing. Ethnic jokes about Cajuns and Texans almost invariably ridiculed the Cajuns, reflecting their poor self image:

> All the Cajuns working for NASA in Houston had to be fired because every time a launch was announced, they knocked off to eat. (Wilson & Jacobs 1974)

Or,

> A cannibal went to the people market. He asked the man behind the counter what he had fresh. He said he just had a Texan and a Cajun left. So the man asked how much they cost. He said, "The Texan will cost you five dollars a pound. The Cajun will cost you forty dollars a pound." "Why so much for the Cajun?" asked the cannibal. "Hell, did you ever try to clean one of them?" (Don Montoucet 1978)

Sexuality is a sensitive subject in most cultures and sexual ineptitude is among the worst possible insults for any culture. Consider the following riddle:

> Q: Do you know what Cajun foreplay is?
>
> A: Chére, you sleeping?

The anti-Cajun bias in jokes is less evident in recent years. Preluded by a renaissance of traditional music in the late forties, the culture began to recover during the surge of regionalism which followed World War II. Changes on the political, educational and popular scenes led by the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) have brought about a rehabilitation of the Cajun self-image, complete with French

language education in the schools and French programming in the media. This transformation is reflected in current oral literature in both French and English (though a recent study by my colleague David Barry seems to show that stories in English tend to put the Cajuns down, while those in French tend not to).

Texas and Texans continue to figure prominently in the ongoing border battles in Cajun jokelore, but now the Cajuns have begun to return fire. Some stories take on the bigger and better Texas bull by its own longhorns.

> A Cajun taxicab driver in Baton Rouge picked up a Texan on his way to the airport. When they passed by the LSU football stadium, the Texan said, "What's that?" The Cajun said, "That's Tiger Stadium. "The Texan said, "How long did it take y'all to build it?" The Cajun said, "Oh, about five years." The Texan said, "Oh, we've got a bigger one in Austin that only took one year." As they passed the state capitol, the Texan asked again, "What's that building?" The Cajun said, "That's the state capitol." "And how long did it take y'all to build that?" The Cajun said, "About three years." The Texan said, "We've got one in Austin that only took six months." The Cajun had just about enough of this, you know? Then they drove past the Mississippi River Bridge. The Texan said, "How long did it take y'all to build that bridge?" The Cajun said, "I don't know. It wasn't there this morning." (Alex Giroir, 1984)

Or,

> A Cajun decided to move to Texas. He was talking with his neighbor, trying to convince him to go with him. "You ought to come on to Texas with me," he said. "They say that everything is better over there." "No," his neighbor said, "I'm happy here. I wouldn't like it over there." So the fellow moved, but his neighbor stayed. About a year later, the fellow comes back to visit his old neighbor. "I can't believe you're still here, trying to scratch a living out of that tired old dirt. Man, you ought to come to Texas. There are marvelous things there." His friend said, "Like what?" He said, "I grew a head of cabbage that was so big that, during a downpour, my new neighbor's whole herd of some fifty sheep was able to get under the leaves and not one of them got wet." "Boy," the old neighbor said, "that must've been some head of cabbage." The fellow said, "Sure, and here you are still stuck in the same old rut. Nothing new ever happens here." "Oh," his friend said, "we had something new the other day. The fellow who lives on your old place was having a pot built, and that pot

vas so big, the men hammering the handles in place on one end couldn't hear those on the other end." His friend said, "What in the vorld did they vant to do vith a pot that big?" The fellov shot back, "Cook your cabbage head." (Stanislaus Faul 1983; told in French, my translation)

Even hell is no match for the reneved Cajun spirit:

A busload of Cajuns vent over a cliff and all vere killed instantly. When they got to heaven's gate, St. Peter vas informed by God that there had been a mistake. They veren't supposed to come until next veek. There vas no room yet in heaven. So St. Peter sent them dovn to hell just temporarily until their places in heaven could be prepared. A fev days later, Satan came to the pearly gates to talk to St. Peter. "Listen," he said, "don't you think you could take those Cajuns off my hands." St. Peter said, "What's the matter? They giving you trouble?" "Well," Satan said, "first they had a fais dodo. Then they had a banco. Nov they're having a bingo. They're trying to raise money to air-condition the damn place." (Fred Tate 1976; told in French, my translation)

Indeed, the Cajuns are brash, bold, even belligerent, in their reneved sense of identity. According to a currently popular expression, "You can tell a Cajun a mile off, but you can't tell him a damn thing up close." Many who endured the second-class citizenship offered them during Americanization have apparently decided that they vant none of it. The ethnic revival has even taken a fev turns that the establishment did not anticipate. The ethnic slur "coonass" has been confiscated and nov appears on bumper stickers and t-shirts reading, "Coonasses make better lovers 'cause they eat anything," and "You ain't done nothing till you've done it vith a coonass." A coonass seven course meal is described as "a pound of boudin and a six pack of beer." The expression, "the only difference between a coonass and a horse's ass is the Sabine River," explicitly, though left-handedly defuses the ethnic slur which came over from Texas during the post var oil boom.

Yet, while Ron Guidry and Paul Prudhomme have claimed to be proud coonasses on national television, many continue to feel offended by the term, wondering aloud, "How can you get the "ass" out of "coonass"?"

The new cultural pride's boisterous expressions are not reserved for traditional jousting partners. The lead story about the Cajun who went to Harvard focuses on New England, a bastion of Americana. Some of these stories offer a new image of the Cajun swaggering through the wide world, while reflecting his background in Louisiana politics where there is an important difference between what is legal and what is possible:

> A Cajun went to Chicago to visit his daughter. He was following the directions that she had sent by mail, but missed a turn in heavy traffic. So he pulled over to one side of the road and prepared to make a U-turn. A traffic cop came running over to protest, "Hey, man, you can't do that!" The Cajun surveyed the street and said, "Yeah, I believe I've got enough room." (Don Montoucet 1978; told in French, my translation)

Their ignorance of the world, which formerly made Cajuns the butt of jokes, they now use to disarm outsiders. In real life, they have been known to avoid traffic tickets outside South Louisiana by pretending to speak no English.

Current jokes even take on defectors as the following story directed at children who grew up speaking French but abandoned the language once away at school. This last joke reflects the Cajuns' desire to preserve their linguistic and cultural integrity now that giving up the language, once considered a prerequisite for social promotion, is seen as an affectation which can only lead to cultural suicide.

A young Cajun went off to school and when he returned home after one semester, he told his mother and father that he no longer spoke French. His parents were a little surprised at this sudden loss of his native language, but they had heard that such things happened at college. To make sure that his parents understood and believed him, the young man asked over and over again what things were in French.

"What's that?" he would ask.

"Une chaise," his parents would answer.

"And what's that?"

"Une table."

"And that?"

"Une porte."

His parents quickly tired of this game, but the young man continued to demonstrate his newfound inability to speak French. They all survived the first evening somehow and finally went to bed. His parents were up early and were already at work in the garden by the time the young man awoke. His father commented under his breath about this additional bad habit that had been learned at school. The young man quickly resumed his efforts to show his ignorance of French. Just as he was asking once again, "What's that?" pointing to a rake leaning on the fence, he accidently stepped on its teeth, causing the rake to hit him smartly on the forehead. "Mon maudit, sacré tonnerre de rateau!" he blurted out in pain. "Ah," said his father with a smile, "Je vois que ça commence à te revenir." ("I see it's coming back to you.") (Clotile Richard 1975; told in French, my translation)

Sometimes that's what it takes. It should be pointed out, in conclusion, that there is not a clear dividing point between the attitudes of the past and those of today. The entire spectrum of jokes can be found in the current repertoire. As one informant put it, when I asked him if he knew any jokes about Cajuns, "What do you want? Upgrade or downgrade?" Justin Wilson-type stories can still be heard, and usually people think they are funny, but a feeling of discomfort sometimes accompanies the laughter. There is an unmistakable tendency to rehabilitate the Cajuns' sense of identity these days and Cajun culture is showing renewed vigor in its oral literature, striking back with the help of rake handles and humor.

*Tellers' names and session dates refer to my collection in the Archive of Folklore and Oral History, University of Southwestern Louisiana.

OFF COLOR CAJUN JOKES (CECILIA AREA)

Jay Edwards

These jokes were collected in the local version of Cajun French in the town of Cecilia, St. Martin Parish, in 1973. They illustrate many of the anxieties and taboos, found among Cajun women, living in the country towns in that period.

I do not know if they are appropriate for the Cajun Culture Center, or not. If properly explained and analyzed, I believe they could be set within the context of the other forms of humor, discussed by Ancelet in this report.

la inave sŏ garso k'ave ü e HOT DATE e sva avek en fi. epi
there was this boy who had had a hot date with a girl and

il a pu ale sŏ kofese le landŏme. sas fe lŏ pret mand
he had to go to confession the next day. so the priest

si il ave tuse la fam, kom it frote sü so bra kom sa.
if he had touched the woman, as he rubbed his arm like this.

i di no, per. ze pa fe sa. zŏ le pa frote. i di tü la tape?
he says, no father. I didn't do that. I didn't rub her. he
says did you beat her?

no per, i di, zŏ le pa tape. be i di turn tva shetva mo garso
no father, he says, i didn't beat her. good, he says, go back
home my boy

pi di manz se bal dŏ fve. Oh, me i di per, koma tü krva
then he says eat five bales of hay. Oh, but he says, father
how do you think

zŏ pe far pu manze se bal dŏ fve? i di, zŏ svi pa e söval!
I can manage to eat five bales of hay? he says, I'm not a horse!

me, i di, ve, me sa pra e söval kom tva pu ale avek en fam
but, he says, yes, but it takes a horse like you to go with a
woman

pu kuse vek en fam epi far a riye!
to sleep with a woman and not do anything!

en fwa i nave en fi epi en garso. epi la fi ave ü a far
once there was a girl and a boy. and the girl had had to do

avek en om ava se marye. sas fe i di a sa mama, i di
with a man before marrying. so she says to her mother, she says

mama, koma zö va far? i va sapersvar ke zö svi pa en fi.
mama how shall I do? he will notice that I'm not a virgin.

ah, sa mama di, se pa riye sa ma fi. i di on a pu far busri
ah, her mother says, that's nothing my girl. she says, we have
a busherie (butchering)

ozurdvi. e, i di, o va prand en orey d'koso epi, i di tü va
today. and she says, we'll take a pig's ear and she says, you'll

t' kole sa! sas fe i di a svar, i di kom vuzot va komase
stick that on yourself! so, she says, at night when you begin

i di, sa sra sere. i va zame s'apersevvar. sas fe kö de fet.
she says it'll be tight. he will never notice. so it was.

izo komase lör ACTION. la, la fi s'lamante, es' l amante!
they began their action. There, the girl wailed, she wailed!

oh, lvi, s'löv malörö. i di, i par pu var apre lö doktor
oh, him, he gets up, the poor soul. he says, he leaves to see
about a doctor

pu sa fam. il arive en but e deyor. i röturn d'abor, i di
for his wife. he gets a little ways outside. he returns first,
he says

oh mom, i di, ga i di, zö va met la kokot dö ma fam a ho l'lornish
oh mom, he says, look he says, I'll put my wife's kokot (sexual
parts) on top of the cornice

i di si el vö pise!
he says in case she wants to piss!

en fva inave en viye fam epi e viyöoom. iz ave en bel baskur dö pul.
once upon a time there vas an old woman and an old man. They had
a beautiful chicken coop.

epi iz ave e peroke. e lvi ete ada la kaz tu l'ta. sas fe e zur
and then they had a parrot. and he vas in a cage all the time.
so one day

lö viyo om vye kote sa viye fam, i di viye, pukva tü las pa
the old man comes near his vife, he says, old woman vhy don't
you free

l' peroke. i di, pov bet si epasia da set kaz! oh no, i di,
the parrot. he says, the poor thing is so frustrated in that
cage! oh, no, she says

paskö i va far dü mal a me pul. oh, tu krva pa sa viye i di.
because he'll hurt my chickens. Oh, you don't believe that old
woman, he says.

sas fe, i lvi l'ö lase. il a pa perdü d'ta sar, i va. i gremp
so they let him go. he didn't lose any time, dear he goes. he
climbs

en pul. oh, il di atrap lö, i di, trap les, i di, me lö da la
on a hen. oh, she says, catch him, she says, catch them, she says
put him in

kaz. Sasfe, el trap lö peroke, i la mi da la kaz akor
the cage. so she catches the parrot, and they put him in the cage
again.

lö ta apre sa, i di viye tu las pa lö peroke, i di. oh no
the time after that, he says, old woman, you don't the parrot
he says. oh no

i di zö lasra pa. i va far la mem sos il a fe la promyar fva!
she says, I won't free him. He'll do the same thing he did the
first time!

sas fe, oh, no, i di, na tro dö ta viye i di, il a ubliye tu sa.
so, oh, no he says, it's too long ago old woman he says, he's
forgotten all that

sas fe la viye la lase. me ser, el lave pa lase, il a komase
so the old woman lets him out. but dear, she had hardly let him
go, he began

deryar le pul akor. pasko il a, la fam l'trap. i di, viye isi
behind the hens again. because he did, the woman catches him,
she says, come here

so ti gars. se sa tũ vó fer? el a tu eplume sa tet.
my lad. is that what you want to do? she plucked all the feathers from his head.

el a mi la tet prop. epi la, e di, dimas zõ võ tu va a la mes
she plucked his head clean. and then she says, Sunday I want you to go to Mass.

e t'aswar dõda lõ prõyme ba an ava. sas fe il a ete a la mes.
and to sit in the front in the first row. so, he went to mass.

sak ki rantre da l'egliz i turne sa tet epi i gete.
each one who entered the churh, he turned his head and looked (at).

tut a lõr ina en viyo om BALDHEAD k'a rantre. i's' turn kom sa
after a while and old baldheaded man comes in. he turns like this

idi, "hey, two," i di, "viyõ koke dõ pul, viye t'aswar an ava
he says, "hey, you", he says, "old cuckold of hens, come sit in front

avek mva!"
with me!"

PART VI CAJUN MUSIC

CAJUN AND CREOLE MUSIC: ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT

Barry Jean Ancelet

Like most other features of Louisiana French culture, Cajun music and zarico are the products of creolization. Cajun music is a blend of German, Spanish Scotch, Irish, Anglo-American, Afro-Caribbean and American Indian influences with a base of western French and French Acadian folk tradition. Zarico, the most contemporary expression of black Creole music, and its precursors like la-la and juré, developed from the same set of influences with a heavier dose of Afro-Caribbean rhythms and styles. Both traditions were built by musicians who had little or no formal training who improvised the music of their generation out of the ones that came before them. Cajun music differs substantially from the traditional music of its sister French American cultures in Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, New England and even Missouri because none of these other places had the unique blend of ingredients found in South Louisiana. Similarly, zarico differs from the music of the black South. Further, Cajun music and zarico were born in exile, of ancient traditions which found themselves displaced, in a New World where old ways did not stand in the way of new combinations. In the earliest period of French influence, between the claiming of Louisiana by Lasalle in 1682 and the first efforts at colonization in 1699, there was obviously little music. Louisiana was explored and colonized primarily by men who had already been changed by the frontier and were no longer French but French Canadians. The most important aspect of this new North American experience was personal freedom.

Away from the constraints of the complex European system, these early settlers began to create a new identity for themselves to coincide with the new life they had in the New World. This new life depended only on their own abilities and ambitions. They were free to take as big a bite as they thought they could chew. The personal freedom available to these early explorers was reflected in their folklore and traditions. Their oral tradition began to include a large repertoire of tall tales, in addition to their western European stock of animal tales and fairy tales. Their songs began to include bawdy and humerous songs as well as the traditional ballads they brought with them from France. Some older songs coincided with contemporary preoccupations. "A qui me passera du bois," for example, told of a maiden lost in the woods. Other songs were developed to reflect conditions in the New World. "La Plainte du coureur de bois" tells of the loneliness of trappers and hunters during the long Canadian winters and described the socializing aspect of spring when they would come in to trade their goods and to see their wives and lovers.

Some songs clearly reflected their European origins. They sang unaccompanied ballads which preserved history and told of wives and wars and faraway lands. Songs like "Malbrough s'en va-t-guerre," "La Belle et le capitaine," "La Guerre de septs ans," and "Trois jolis tambours," reflect the history and tradition of France.

Another popular French song tradition transplanted to Acadia and Louisiana was the drinking song, called in the New World, la chanson de bamboche. These were especially popular at social gatherings like Christmas and New Year celebrations, wedding receptions and house

dances, and some, like "Trinquons," were often repeated to mark the pouring of each new glass.

Trinquons, trinquons, mes chers camarades,
Mais oublions jamais la raison.
Soutenez mon verre et me voilà par terre.
Chantez de boire du matin au soir.
Que le tonnerre grogne et que la muraille recule.
Me voilà par terre du matin au soir.

(As sung by Fenelus and Cleveland Sonnier, Erath, 1934; Lomax/AFS 26a3) Some of these have survived even today. The universally known "Chevaliers de la table ronde is echoed in "Fais trois de la table ronde," which retains essential elements of the pre-Aurthurian fisher king legend which describes the efforts to revive the ailing king and his land which is dying with him by questing. Meanwhile, the king is kept alive with a trickle of alcohol.

O fais trois tours de la table ronde,
Fais trois tours de la table ronde. Allons en chercher, chercher, chercher, chercher. O c'est quoi, se divertir, c'est comme des camarades,
C'est quoi, se divertir, c'est comme des camarades.
Allons en chercher, chercher, chercher, chercher. Un de nos plus grands de nos ivrognes était au lit malade.
Mettez lui couché en bas d'une table de vin.
Allons en chercher, chercher, chercher, chercher.
Tous les temps en temps quittez une goutte dégouter,
Tous les temps en temps quittez une goutte dégouter.
Allons en chercher, chercher, chercher, chercher. De leur quitter une goutte dégouter, c'est pour les satisfaire. De leur quitter une goutte dégouter, c'est pour les satisfaire.
Allons en chercher, chercher, chercher, chercher.

(As sung by Kenry Fontenot, Welsh, 1977; Ancelet collection, USL/FA) This theme is even found in contemporary dance music, as heard in the Balfa Brothers "Parlez-nous àboire, non pas du mariage..." (The Balfa Brothers play Traditional Cajun Music, Swallow Records) and "La Danse de limonade" (Nathan Abshire, Pinegrove Blues , Swallow Records)

Founded in 1604, Port Royal was one of the first European settlements north of Mexico. At least 85% of the settlers who eventually became the Acadians came from a 20 mile radius around Loudun in the province of Poitou
in 1632. Other settlers came from Bretagne, Normandie and parts of southwestern France. Though they were primarily farmers at first, some already knew the ways of the sea and others soon came to learn them as fishermen on the Acadian peninsula. This maritime heritage is reflected in "Sept ans sur mer," a sailor's shanty about a shipwrecked family which is known all along the coast of Europe from the North Sea to the Mediterrean:

On a passé six ans sur mer Sans pouvoir border la terre. Au bout de la septième année, On a manqué de provisions. On a mangé souris et rats
Jusque le tourbe de navire. On a tiré la courte paille
Pour voir lequel qui serait mangé. O voilà d petit Jean qu'il tombe au sort.
Ça serait petit Jean qui serait mangé. O petit Jean, ça lui fait du mal.
Il crie, "Courage, mes camarades. "Je vois la terre sur toutes c'tés,
Trois pigeons blancs qui sont à voltiger. "Je vois aussi trois filles du prince
Qui se promenaient au long du rivage. "O si jamais je mets les pieds sur terre,
La plus jolie, je l'épouserai."

(As sung by Elita Hoffpauir, New Iberia, 1934; Lomax/AFS 31a1)

Other traditions affected the Acadian repertoire as well. Some songs apparently reflect the Celtic origins of some Acadian settlers. "Madame Gallien," for example, portrays a mother who inadvertantly makes a pact with a faerie by wishing while walking down a long country lane:

Madame Gallien était promenant
Dans son jardin, son coeur bien chagrin.
Tout le long d'une allée, Elle faisait que pleurer,
Toujours en espérant Pierrot Grouillet pour se marier.

Pierrot Grouillet, il est arrivé.
Il dit, "Josette, faut se marier." Tout chacun s'en va chez soi
Pour laisser savoir à tout,
Danse, sur le moment,
Monsieur le curé publiera les bans. O son parrain, il la consentant,
Il dit, "Moi, j'irai les mener." Deux vieux boeufs, deux vieux chevaux
Attelés sur un vieux chariot Pour aller marier
Pierrot Grouillet et Mademoiselle Josette. Dans le chemin, ils ont fait rencontre
D'un petit bonhomme,
Un pied chaussé et l'autre nu. Son violon dans son bras, Son archet dans sa main,
Il disait qu'il voulait jouer
Jusqu'à qu'il n'ait plus de souliers.

(As sung by Lanese Vincent and Sidney Richard, Kaplan, 1934; Lomax/AFS 28b1)

When the Acadians were exiled in 1755, they took with them few possessions. They nevertheless carried with them a rich cultural heritage which included their persistent sense of identity based on a blend of French, Celtic, Scots-Irish, and native American influences, reflected in a rich oral tradition and a repertoire of songs and dances. Music for dancing was preserved in hummed reels à bouche. Sometimes, changes in tunes and lyrics reflected the New World and especially the new Louisiana context. In the French version of "Cadet Roussel," one finds features of traditional French architecture described in classic French grammar:

Cadet Roussel a trois maisons (bis)
Qui n'ont ni poutre ni chevrons. (bis) C'est pour loger les hirondelles.
Que direz-vous de Cadet Roussel? Ah, ah, ah oui vraiment,
Cadet Roussel est bon enfant.

In an early Louisiana version collected by Irene Whitfield Holmes during the 1930s, there are changes which reflect the poteaux-en-terre building technique used in New France and Acadia as well as a more informal grammar:

Cadet Roussel a une maison, qui n'a ni poteaux, ni chevrons,
C'est pour loger les hirondelles, qui croyez-vous de cadet
Roussel? Ha, ha, ha, oui, vraiment. Cadet Roussel, c'est
un bon garçon.

In a later version collected in Mamou during the early 1960s by Harry Oster, there are further modifications:

Cadet Roussel, c'est un bon jeune homme,
Cadet Roussel, c'est un vaillant bougre. Cadet Roussel, il a
des chiens que le roi n'a pas de si bons,
Un aux lapins et l'autre si bete que quand il l'appelle, il
se sauve.
Ah oui,
vraiment. Cadet Roussel, il a une habille que le roi n'a pas de
si belle.
Elle est doublée de papier gris, elle est cousue de la
ficelle.
Ah oui, vraiment. Cadet Rouselle, il a des chevaux que le
roi n'a pas des si bons.
Ils sont si gras que les os percent la selle.
Ah oui, vraiment. Cadet Rouselle, il a-t-un clos que le roi
n'a pas des si grands.
Il est si grand, il monte une face, il crache sur l'autre.
Ah oui, vraiment. Cadet Rouselle, c'est un bon jeune homme.
Cadet Rouselle, c'est un vaillant bougre.

(As sung by Isom Fontenot, Mamou; Oster collection, FA/USL)

There is no verse concerning his house in the entire text of this version, perhaps indicating that poteaux-en-terre proved to be a disastrous building practice in humid, termite-infested South Louisiana. There is also a definite creolization of vocabulary and grammar in this version.

Similarly, there is a noticeable change of vocabulary and style in the following versions of "Le Mariage des animaux." A version collected in Quebec reflects the preservation of animals which were familiar to the settlers of New France:

C'est un corbeau puis une corneille
Qui voulaient bien se marier.

Mais ils voulaient bien faire des noces
Mais ils n'avaient pas de quoi manger. Li lon la... il y en aura.
Mais ils voulaient bien faire des noces Mais ils n'avaient pas de quoi manger.
Aperçoit venir un gros renard,
Trois quarts de lard dessus son corps. Li lon la... il y en aura. Mais pour du lard, nous en avons,
Mais c'est du pain que nous manquons.
Aperçoit venir un gros lapin,
Il tient un pain dessus ses reins. Li lon la... il y en aura.

A version collected in Louisiana preserves the basic sequential structure of this song. Some of the characters are replaced with animals more familiar to the South Louisiana context. Others like the corbigeau reflect the Acadians passage in Canada:

C'est la caille et le perdrix
Qui se marient, o oui lundi.
Du monde, nous avons-t-assez.
C'est du vin qui nous manquera. Leureleureleur, bel oiseau, à rien de plus beau. Passe ici une souris, dessus son dos porte une barril.
Passe ici une souris, dessus son dos porte une barril.
Du monde et du vin, nous avons assez.
C'est de la viande qui nous manquera. Leureleureleur, bel oiseau, à rien de plus beau. Passe ici un corbigeau, dessus son dos porte un gigot.
Passe ici un corbigeau, dessus son dos porte un gigot.
Du monde et du vin et de la viande, nous avons avons assez.
C'est du pain qui nous manquera. Leureleureleur, bel oiseau, à rien de plus beau. Passe ici un pigeon, dedans son bec porte un pain long. Passe ici un pigeon, dedans son bec porte un pain long. Du monde et du vin et de la viande et du pain, nous avons assez. C'est la musique qui nous manquera. Leureleureleur, bel oiseau, à rien de plus beau. Passe ici un gros rat, dessus son bras porte un violon. Passe ici un gros rat, dessus son bras porte un violon.
Le gros chat qui est au grenier, "Miaou, miaou, miaou. Miaou, miaou, miaou." "C'est pas mon violon que je regretterai,
Mais c'est mes os qui vont craler. Leureleureleur, bel oiseau, @ rien de plus beau.

(As sung by Sabry Guidry, Abbeville, 1976; Ancelet collection, FA/USL)

In some cases, only the kernel of the story survives. "Grand Dieu, que je suis à mon aise," a well-known French folksong, loses most of its direct references to European wars in the New World version. This excerpt from a French version includes specific European references:

> Grand Dieu, que je suis à mon aise
> Quand j'ai ma mie auprès de moi, auprès de moi.
> De temps en temps, je la regarde
> Et je lui dis, "Embrasse-moi." "Comment veux-tu que je
> t'embrasse, Quand on me dit du mal de toi, du mal de toi?
> On me dit que tu pars pour la guerre Chez les Flamands,
> défendre le roi."

The following Louisiana version, sung in 1977 by Odile Falcon, of Lafayette, is remarkably complete, though it generalizes the references to the war:

> Oh, Grand Dieu, comme je suis-t-à mon aise Quand je la vois,
> elle assise auprès de moi. "Temps en temps je vous regarde,
> ma douce aimée, Oh, ma douce aimée, embrasse donc moi." "Oh,
> cher amant, comment tu veux moi, je t'embrasse Quand on me
> défend de t'aimer tous les jours. Un petit mot qui me monte
> à l'oreille,
> C'était de me faire faire un petit portrait, Un petit
> portrait de ta ressemblance
> Et cent fois par jour, je l'embrasserai." "Q'est-ce que tes
> amis diraient de toi,
> Te voir embrasser ce petit portrait?" "Je leur direai que
> c'est le portrait, Que c'est le portrait de ma bien aimée Que
> j'avais quittée d'un si grand regret
> Pour partir servir sur l'armée régulière. Oh maman, elle
> vena me souffler un petit mot à l'oreille
> en me disant que j'étais parti, J'étais parti pour servir le
> grand roi,
> Servir le grand roi sur l'armée régulière.

(As sung by Odile Falcon, Lafayette, 1976; Ancelet collection, FA/USL)

Singers sometimes aproximated unfamiliar sounds when they did not understand geographic references from the old country. "Le Pont de Nantes," a well-known French folksong about a bridge in one of the principal cities in Brittany, survived the Atlantic crossing under

several titles, including "Au Pont des vues," "Au pont du nord," "Le Pont du Nane," and "Bonjour, Hélène."

Older French songs were often adapted to new styles or recent events. "La Veuve de sept ans," originally a complainte about two lovers separated during the Crusades, became in Acadia a song about the Seven Years War:

> J'avais une maitresse, un jour y avait longtemps.
> J'ai reçu une lettre, "en querre il faut aller." Ma pauvre petite maitresse ne fait que brailler
> Toute la nuit et toute la journée. "En querre j'm'en vas, ma belle, j'reviens dans une semaine
> Attendrir nos amours." Ça bien duré sept ans, pendant ma vingtième année
> J'suis rentré en Acadie. J'ai été voir ma belle qui pouvait pas me regarder.
> Oh, la grande misère. J'ai été voir ma mère qui braillait, Mon père est mort, mes frères sont morts, ma terre ruinée Ma belle mariée à cause de la maudite querre. Ecoutez-moi bien, jeunes gens, Partez jamais à la querre. J'ai perdu mon père, perdu ma famille,
> Ma terre est toute ruinée
> A cause de la maudite querre.

(As sung by Pierre Robichaux, 1755 , Presqu'^le Records)

A similar song in Louisiana has the maiden placed in a convent where she dies there of a broken heart before her lover returns from his campaign at war:

> Une jeune fille de quatorze ans,
> O oui, Grand Dieu, que la belle brune,
> Un soir elle dit à son papa,
> "Papa, je veux me marier.""Fillette, jeunesse, mais taisez-vous.
> Vous n'avez pas encore quinze ans. Vous n'avez pas encore quinze ans
> Pour plaire à-t-un amant."Quand la belle a entendu ce discours,
> Elle a monté dans sa chaumière.
> Ses beaux yeux noirs,
> Elle les a essuyés.
> Elle avait plus qu'un seul petit frère
> Qui la reconsole nuit comme le jour.
> "Ma chère soeur, reconsole-toi.
> Papa te mettra au couvent,
> Droit au couvent des orphelines

Là où ce qu'on prie le Dieu souvent." "Mais c'est celui que mon coeur aime.
Il est esclave dedans la querre."J'ai été en querre quatre ans de temps.
Je me suis battu de nuit et jour.
Quand je suis revenu de ma révolte,
Droite chez la belle, je m'en ai été.
En demandant, "Et où la belle?
Et où la belle que j'aimais tant?
Ses beaux jeux noirs, je voudrais les voir,
Je voudrais les voir encore une fois.
"On m'a répond, "Ta belle à toi,
Elle est plus là pour toi la voir.
Elle est morte et enterrée
Depuis trois jours, c'est pas longtemps.
"Bonsoir, la belle, pour la dernière fois.
T'es dans ta tombe, je t'aime encore.
Mes yeux pleureront de nuit et jour,
C'est pour la belle brune que j'aimais tant.
Je me ferai faire un grand crêpe noir
Pendant six mois je le porterai.

(As sung by Julien Hoffpauir, New Iberia, 1934; Lomax/AFS 32b2)

Still another Louisiana version presents the dilemma of the woman whose fiancé is called away to war on the their wedding day. He comforts her saying that he will be back in six weeks, two months at the most, a line echoed by the Confederates as they left for the Civil War. Believing herself a widow after seven years, she remarries only to have her first husband return shortly after the wedding. She is then forced to chose between the two:

Dessus le premier jour des noces, il y a été venu un commandement,
Il y a été venu un commandement, oh un commandement de querre.
"C'est à la querre il faut aller. C'est à la querre il faut partir
"Oh, quand la belle a entendu ça, el e se mit à se désoler.
"Ne pleurez pas autant la belle, ne versez pas autant larmes.
Oh, ma campagne serait pas longue, six semaines à deux mois le plus.
"Oh, ma campagne, elle a bien été belle, elle a été belle et belle et longue.

Oh, ma campagne, elle a bien duré, oh, regarde, elle a duré sept ans.
Au bout de la septième année, oh, quand j'ai pu me retirer,
C'était revenir chez moi, cétait trouver la mariée. Ç'était trouver ma bien aimée qui sortait d'être épousée.
Elle s'est tournée à sa mère, "Oh, vierge, vierge, douce vierge,
Quoi ce qu'en deviendra de moi? Regards donc sept ans je me croyais veuve, et me voilà avec deux maris."
"Courage, courage, courage, ma fille,
Que le premier choix de l'homme lui appartienne à lui ses droits."

(As sung by Agnes Bourque, New Iberia, 1974; Stanford collection, J'étais au bal , Swallow Records)

Creolization has not only affected the texts of songs brought by the Acadian exiles and French immigrants. One result of the blues influence in Louisiana French tradition occurs in the melody in the transformation of gay, lilting European melodies to soulful, plaintive tunes. "Mon petit mari," for example, which in the French version typically combines rather gruesome lyrics concerning the devouring of the diminutive husband by the housecat with a joyous tune, keeps basically the same storyline in the Acadian version, but the melody is altered to a more suitable, plaintive style. Even a danse ronde like "Ah mon beau château" in Louisiana sounds much more plaintive than its older European counterpart because of the addition of a blues seventh to the end of the second line. The tunes of other well-known French danse rondes, or play party songs, like "Papillon, vole," "J'ai été-z au bal hier au soir" (not the contemporary dance tune of the same title), and "La fête printanière" have been adapted to the singing style of the region which esteems an edge and a more bluesy sound than is found in France.

Early Louisiana French instrumental tradition was based on familiar instruments like the fiddle or violin. Yet it is doubtful that the earliest settlers or the Acadian exiles owned instruments. The earliest mention of instruments in Louisiana colonial records is in the succession of a fiddler and clarinettist named Prejean in 1782. Western French instrumental tradition had included brass and reed instruments such as the biniou or cabrette (instruments of the bagpipe family found in Celtic and southwestern French traditions) and trumpets (widely used in Poitou. These instruments fell into disuse in the New World. Tunes were transferred to stringed instruments, yet retained a distinctive drone. The French vielle à roue, with its characteristic bourdon drone, as too complicated and delicate to survive frontier conditions, but early fiddlers playing in open tuning achieved a similar effect. By the time of the exile, English and Scots-Irish reels, jigs, hornpipes and contredanses had already enriched the Acadians' repertoire of dance music.

When instruments were unavailable or, at times, such as Lent, when instrumental music was forbidden, the Acadians had managed to dance anyway, producing music with their voices, clapping their hands, and stamping their feet for percussion. If the repertoire of round dances became stale, they simply used their voices as instruments to produce dance tunes called des reels à bouche. Descriptions of the Acadians at the time of the Dispersion invariably mention their insatiable love of dancing. In a letter to his intendant dated March 12, 1764, Saltoris described a communal wedding and baptism blessing ceremony among the Acadians in Saint-Domingue: "They did not eat until every one had given his toast. They danced, the old and the young alike, all dancing to a

fast step." (Colonial Records Collection, USL Center for Louisiana Studies) Later, in the early nineteenth century, this still held true. C. C. Robin's travelogue from 1803-1805 maintains that the Acadians "love to dance most of all; more than any other people in the colony. At one time during the year, they give balls for travelers and will go ten or fifteen leagues to attend one. Everyone dances, even grandmère and grandpére, no matter what the difficulties they must bear. There may be only a couple of fiddles to play for the crowd, there may be only four candles for light, placed on wooden arms attached to the wall; nothing but long wooden benches to sit on, and only exceptionally a few bottles of tafia diluted with water for refreshment; no matter, everyone dances." Acadian exiles began arriving in Louisiana in 1765, with the deliberate intention of recreating their society on French territory. The first to arrive, however, were surprised to find themselves under Spanish rule, Louisiana having been ceded to Spain in 1762. Yet Spanish language and culture prevailed only at the highest administrative level; everyday life in the colony continued to be essentially in French. The majority of the Acadians who came to Louisiana arrived between 1765 and 1785. The last groups came primarily by way of Santo Domingo and Spain. An attempt to repatriate some of the exiles in France failed because, among other reasons, the Acadians were no longer interested in living in what amounted to a feudal system under the French monarchy. Many of these offered themselves to the King of Spain as settlers for his newly acquired colony in Louisiana. There they joined other Acadians in establishing what they called <u>la Nouvelle Acadie</u>.

The Acadians settled along the banks of the Mississippi River, Bayou Lafourche, and in the lands west of the Atchafalaya Basin near the Poste des Attakapas and the Poste des Opelousas. In all three areas they lived in relative (though not total) isolation and addressed themselves to the huge task of reestablishing their fractured society. Though songs about the exile experience do not seem to have survived, the upheaval would have an affect on their music. The sufferings they had endured endowed their songs with a preoccupation with death, loneliness and lost love and their instrumental music with a mournful quality.

In Louisiana, the Acadians continued to sing the old songs and they created new ones. Their self-imposed isolation in the bayous and southern prairies did not preclude selective contact with other cultures, when they needed or wanted to learn something from their neighbors. They learned agricultural techniques, for example, from the local native American Indian tribes and from the Alsatian/German community along the German coast, fishing techniques from the Anglo-Americans, cooking techniques from the black slaves. Even the Spaniards, generally believed to have influenced only New Orleans architecture and the colonial political scene, contributed to the civilization of the frontier-minded Acadians at contact points like New Iberia and especially through the churches. The steady trickle of French immigrants in the nineteenth century brought some changes in language and customs.

The Acadians' contact with these various cultures also contributed to the development of new musical styles and repertoire. From the

Indians, they apparently learned a terraced singing style and new dance rhythms; from the blacks, they learned the blues, percussion techniques, a love of sycopation and improvisation singing; from the Spanish, they may have learned a few tunes, including the melody to "J'ai passé devant ta porte" (used in a concerto for classical guitar by the eighteenth-century composer Fernando Sors). Refugees and their slaves who arrived from Saint Domingue at the turn of the nineteenth century reinforced the African influence with a syncopated West Indian beat. The Jewish German immigrants began importing diatonic accordions (invented in Vienna in 1828) when Acadians and blacks became interested in the instruments toward the end of the nineteenth century. They blended these elements to create a new music just as they were synthesizing the same cultures to create Cajun society.

From the Anglo-American immigrants who arrived in increasing numbers throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they were to learn much including new fiddle tunes like Virginia reels, square dances and hoedowns, along with a few new ballads some of which they translated into French. A remarkable example of this is "J'ai marié un ouvrier," a Louisiana French version of the English ballad, "James Harris" or the "The Demon Lover," sometimes known as "The Carpenter's Wife" (Child 243). In Louisiana, an ouvrier is not a general laborer, as in France, but specifically a carpenter. In this version a well-bred young wife, bored with her carpenter husband, is swept away by a sailor. When he brings her to the port city, she learns that she is to sail with him. She then realizes that she will never return to the family she has abondoned. The yellow silk dress he offers

her in consolation is mentioned in Scottish versions of the ballad. Although it is tempting to explore the connection between Breton France and Celtic England, it is more likely that his Louisiana French variant was translated from American sources. Though many early British and Scottish versions describe the coast in question as the "banks of Italy," an American version published in Philadelphia in 1858 mentions "the banks of the Old Tennessee," as does the Louisiana French version:

> J'ai marié un ouvrier, moi qui était si vaillante fille,
> Mais c'était de m'en dispenser sans attraper des reproches."
> "Mais quitte ton ouvrier, et viens t'en donc, c'est avec moi.
> O viens t'en donc, c'est avec moi, dessus l'écore du
> Tennessee." "Dessus l'écore du Tennessee, quoi-ce t'aurais
> pour m'entretenir?
> Quoi-ce t'aurais pour m'entretenir dessus l'écore du
> Tennessee?" J'en ai de ces gros navires qui naviguent dessus
> l'eau
> Et soi-disant pour t'opposer de travailler." Au bout de
> trois jours, trois jours et trois semaines, O la belle se
> mit à pleurer l'ennui de sa famille. "Ne pleure donc pas la
> belle, je t'achèterai une robe de soie jaune
> Qu'elle soit mais la couleur de l'or et de l'argent." "Je ne
> pleure non pas ton or, ni ton or ni ton argent,
> Mais je pleure ma famille que j'ai laissé là-bas." "Je t'ai
> pas toujours dit, la belle, et quand ce batiment calerait,
> O il aurait une carlet à plus jamais resourdre. "Dessus
> l'écore du Tennessee, t'embrasserais ton cher et petit bébé,
> O tu l'embrasserais à plus jamais revoir."

(As sung by Lanese Vincent and Sidney Richard, Kaplan, 1934; AFS 27b1)

At the turn of the century, Cajun music entered a highly creative period, which among other things combined song and instrumental music in he same performance. There was a tendency in European tradition to keep songs and instrumental music separate. Dance music was almost exclusively instrumental except for danse rondes which were sung with

no instrumental accompaniment. European song tradition tended to be textually oriented. Ballads and folksongs were traditionally unaccompanied and sung for their content. In African tradition, music, singing and dancing were all inextricably related, and this may have influenced the combination of singing and instrumental traditions in the nineteenth century, not only in Louisiana, but throughout the American melting pot. The result of this process in Cajun music was the development of new songs which combined the two traditions. Instrumental parts were added to old ballads and words were composed for fiddle tunes. And both contributed to a wide new repertoire of music for dancing.

In this formative period, some of the most influential musicians were the black Creoles who brought a strong, rural blues element into Cajun music. Musicians such as Adam Fontenot and Amédé Ardoin developed new ways of making music with the newly acquired accordion. Ardoin's innovative, syncopated style made him a favorite at both black and white dances, but it was his powerful and highly creative singing that attracted the attention of early recording scouts. He was among the first of a group of Louisiana French musicians to record, immediately following Joe Falcon's pioneering "Allons à Lafayette" in 1928. These early recordings, which the black Creole singer and accordionist made with white Cajun fiddler Dennis McGee, were immensely popular and influential. In the 1930s, his style became increasingly introspective. Because he recorded alone in this later period, his creative genius was unbridled and he composed songs which quickly became part of the classical Cajun music repertoire. His percussive accordion style also

influenced the parallel development of zarico music, later refined by contemporary zarico musicians like Clifton Chenier. Some of Ardoin's most important compositions include the "Eunice Two-step" (today called "Jolie Catin"),

> "La Valse à Abe" ("La Valse de quatre-vingt-dix-neuf ans"), "Tante Aline" ("Chère Alice"), "Blues de la prison" ("Two-step de la prison"), "La Valse à Austin Ardoin" ("La Valse de l'orphelin"), and "Madame Atchen" ("La Robe barrée"):
> Malheureuse, quoi t'as fait, oui avec moi?
> Tu me fais du mal chaque fois je te regarde, malheureuse.
> Quoi t'as dit, mais chère Joline, tu me fais de mal. Quoi faire t'as fait, mais tout ça t'as fait si long avec moi?
> Je vas m'en aller, je vas m'en aller, mais dans la maison, Je vas m'en aller, mais dans la maison sans toi, Jouline.
> Malheureuse, regardez donc, mais quoi t'as fait à ton petit coeur.
> J'ai pas pu juger ton histoire rapport à toi. Ta bonne histoire est aussi bonne que tes bonnes paroles.
> Ça tu m'as dit, toi, Jouline, ça m'a fait du mal. Chère Jouline, je suis pas s~r d'être capable de m'en aller,
> C'est pour rester pour espérer que tu t'en reviens. O Jouline, comment je vas faire, tu me fais du mal. Je suis content pour toi, Jouline, toi, mon cher petit monde.
> T'aurais pas du de me dire ça, mais joli coeur. Dis ton idée, je suis pas comme ça, toi, malheureuse. Chaque fois je dis, oui, je vas rentourner, mais à la maison. Mon coeur fait mal juste pour assez pour moi pleurer.
>
> (From Amédé Ardoin: Louisiana Creole Music , Old Timey Records)

In the early part of the twentieth century, commercial recording companies like RCA Victor, Bluebird, Decca, Columbia, and Okeh began recording ethnic and regional music throughout America, not out of an altruistic sense of cultural preservation but out of a straightforward desire to make money. Very simply, these companies realized that members of ethnic communities across the country would only be tempted to buy their record players if there was music they wanted to hear on record. In South Louisiana, this effort captured the end of this

formative period in the development of Cajun music. It also helped to fix these early texts. Although the singers usually improvised lyrics with each performance, these recordings sounded the same each time they were played. Consequently, they often became considered the standard versions.

Many of the first songs recorded were based on earlier tunes, but were themselves brand new adaptations. The first record to be released included Joe and Cléoma Falcon's "Allons à Lafayette" and "La Valse qui m'a porté en terre." "Allons à Lafayette, a two-step, was typical of the changes of the times, being a relatively new song adapted from an older tune, "Jeunes gens de la campagne."

Allons à Lafayette, mais pour changer ton nom.
On va t'appeler Madame, Madame Canaille Comeaux/comme moi.
Petite, t'es trop mignonne pour faire ta criminelle.
Comment tu crois, mais mo, je peux faire, mais moi tout seul.
Mais toi, mais joli coeur, regarde donc mais quoi t'as fait.
Si loin que moi, je suis de toi, mais ça, ça me fait pitié.

(As sung by Joseph Falcon, Louisiana Cajun Music , vol. I, Old Timey Records)

Fiddlers such as Dennis McGee and Sady Courville, Ernest Frugé, the Connors, the Aguillards, and the Walkers still composed tunes, but the accordion was rapidly becoming the mainstay of traditional dance bands. Limited in notes and keys, it simplified Cajun music as songs that it could not play tended to fade from the scene. Fiddlers were often relegated to playing a duet accompaniment or a percussive second line below the dominant accordion's melody lead. The traditional instrumentation of the classic Cajun music group came to be the

accordion, the fiddle, and the guitar, with sometimes a percussionist playing a triangle or some improvised instrumental noisemakers like spoons, bottles or a corrugated washboard.

Until the turn of the twentieth century, there was a wide variety of dance styles which included old world waltzes, contredanses, varsoviennes, polkas, mazurkas, and cotillions, as well as two-steps, one-steps, baisse-bas, la-las, and breakdowns developed to accompany the contemporary musical styles. The simplification of musical styles brought on in part by modernization and the accordion simplified dance styles as well, leaving the waltz and the two-step as the major steps.

During this period, new songs were composed often utilizing very ancient themes from French and African traditions. "Les Barres de la prison," Henry Fontenot's classic blues waltz based on Douglas Bellard's original recording of "La Valse de la prison," for example, is a traditional gallows blues lament or prisoner's farewell which recalls the old French "Chanson de Mandrin."

Goodbye, chère vieille mam,
Goodbye, pauvre vieux pap,
Goodbye à mes frères
Et mes chères petites soeurs.
Moi, j'ai été condamné
Pour la balance de ma vie
Dans les barres de la prison. Moi, j'ai roulé.
Je m'ai mis à malfaire. J'avais la tête dure.
J'ai rentré dans le tracas.
Asteur je suis condamné
Pour la balance de ma vie
Dans les barres de la prison. Ma pauvre vieille maman,
Elle s'a mis sur ses genoux,
Les deux mains sur la tête,
En pleurant pour moi.
Elle dit, "Mmmmmmmmm, Cher petit garçon, Moi, je vas jamais te revoir.
Toi, t'as été condamné

Pour la balance de ta vie
Dans les barres de la prison." J'ai dit, "Chère vieille maman,
Pleure pas pour moi.
Il faut tu pries pour ton enfant
Pour essayer de sauver son âme
De les flammes de l'enfer."

(On Bois sec , Melodeon Records) In 1934, Lomax had recorded several unaccompanied ballads which used this theme. Compare the following:

Tu vas souffert, petite fille,
Pour ça t'après faire, T'auras jamais de bonheur dans ta vie. Oui, jour aujourd'hui,
Ma chère vieille maman
Dans la porte de la prison,
Les deux mains sur la tête, chère,
Pleurant pour moi.
O j'ai dit, "Ma maman,
Pleure pas pour moi.
Demande à tes amis pour t'aider
Faire des prières pour sauver mon âme
De les flammes de l'enfer.
O voir aujourd'hui, voir aujourd'hui,
J'ai fini de te voir sur la terre du Bon Dieu.
Goodbye, petite fille, goodbye, petite fille,
Pour tout mes jours et tout tes tiens.
"J'ai dit, "Fais dire aujourd'hui
Que j'après m'en aller.
Je pars, tu connais.
"Dit, "Mon cher monde, garde-le voir."

(from "Blues de la prison," Joseph Jones, Jennings, 1934; AFS 80a1) The following, a remarkable version of the prisoner's lament based on a conversation between the prisoner and his mother and grandfather, utilizes another ancient motif, the keys to the cell. A similar ballad from French Canada, "Le Prisonnier et la fille du gèlier" (in Marius Barbeau's Folk Songs of French Canada), describes a jailer's daughter who falls in love with a prisoner and steals the prison keys to free him. He refuses to leave, choosing instead to accept his fate to be hanged. In this Louisiana version, the prisoner

eventually is resigned to his fate and makes arrangements for his burial.

Chère Mam, o viens me donner les clefs,
Les clefs de la prison, les clefs de la prison.
"Baptiste, comment tu veux je te donne
Les clefs de la prison quand les officiers
Les ont accrochées dans le cou, les ont accrochées dans le cou." Chère Mam, ils vont venir me chercher,
Mais à neuf heures à soir,
Mais oui, c'est pour me pendre,
Mais à dix heures en nuit, mais à dix heures en nuit. Chère Mam, c'est ça qui me fait plus de peine,
C'est de savoir ma mort,
Aussi longtemps d'avance, aussi longtemps d'avance.
Grandpère, mais qui s'a mis à genouxen s'arrachant les cheveux, en s'arrachant les cheveux.
"Baptiste, comment t'as pu quitté,
Mais c'est pour t'en aller
Dans une si grande prison?" Cher Pap, comment tu voulais fais
Quand les officiers étaient tout le tour de moi
Avec le carabines, avec les carabines? Chère Mam, c'est ça qui me fait plus de peine, C'est de savoir ma mort
Aussi longtemps d'avance, aussi longtemps d'avance. O Mam, ils vont venir me chercher,
Mais à neuf heures à soir,
Mais oui, c'est pour me pendre,
Mais à dix heures en nuit, mais à dix heures en nuit. Chère Mam, oui, je veux c'est toi qui m'emmènes,
Mais oui, mon corps en terre
Avec mon beau cheval cannel
Et ma belle voiture noire avec les quatre roues rouges, avec les quatres roues rouges.

(Sung by Elita Hoffpauir, New Iberia, 1934; AFS 31a2) This theme of the prisoner's farewell has recurred in many songs of the Cajun repertoire, including Amédé Ardoin's and Austin Pitre's versions of "Les Blues de la prison" and the ubiquitous "Les flammes d'enfer."

Musicians continued to enlarge the repertoire, recording recently developed songs into the mid-1930s. By the time record companies began recording Cajun music, much of what could nov be called the core

repertoire already existed. "Jolie Blonde" was first recorded in 1928 by Joe Falcon's brothers-in-law, Amédé, Ophé and Cléopha Breaux. The principal elements of this classic Cajun waltz are already evident in this early version. The instrumentation was to become standard: accordion lead, fiddle and guitar accompaniment and a high-pitched singing style. The theme of unfaithfulness and lost love are also present:

> Jolie blonde, regardez donc quoi t'as fait,
> Tu m'as quitté pour t'en aller.
> Pour t'en aller avec un autre, oui, que moi, Quel espoir et quel avenir, mais, moi, je vas avoir? Jolie blonde, tu m'as laissé, moi tout seul,
> Pour t'en aller chez ta famille.
> Si t'aurais pas écouté tout les conseils des autres
> Tu serais ici-t-avec moi aujourd'hui. Jolie blonde, tu croyais il y avait juste toi, Il y a pas juste toi dans le pays pour moi aimer.
> Si je peux trouver juste une autre, jolie blonde,
> Bon Dieu sait, moi, j'ai un tas.
>
> (From Louisiana Cajun Music , vol. V, Old Timey Records)

Mayus Lafleur and Leo Soileau recorded "Hé Mam," and "La Valse Criminelle" before Lafleur's untimely death in 1929. Dennis McGee Hecorded reels, breakdowns and bluesy waltzes with his brother-in-law Sady Courville that same year. He also recorded several sides with Amédé Ardoin, flying directly in the face of the strict segregationist codes of the times. Musicians who would be important later in the revival of Cajun music after World War II were already active. Lawrence Walker recorded several sides with his father and uncle as the Walker Brothers. Nathan Abshire was already experimenting with his combination of Cajun and blues traditions. Angelas Lejeune recorded "La Valse de la Pointe Noire" (later known as the "Kaplan Waltz") and "Bayou Pom-Pom"

as early as 1930. The recordings of these and others like Moise Robin, the Segura Brothers and Blind Uncle Gaspard were regional successes as Cajuns began to acquire record players.

The advent of the radio further enhanced the popularity of certain performers who had the good fortune to have access to the broadcast media. Like the phonograph player, radio, which broadcast records and live performances, lent importance to the most popular trends. It also introduced into South Louisiana music from the music centers emerging in Nashville, New York and the West Coast.

The early surge of musical creativity carried over into this new period as Cajun performers adapted tunes they heard on the radio. Joseph and Cléoma Falcon's "Les Filles à 'n oncle Hélaire" was a spicy sycopated tune with a Caribbean-inspired beat. Some performers translated popular country hits into French or composed new words to popular tunes to produce new songs for the repertoire. Joe and Cléoma soon began including their own French translations of American popular tunes like the Carter Family's "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blues Eyes" and "Lu Lu's Back in Town:" Tu peux dire... (words) Leo Soileau, who accompanied Mayus Lafleur on the second Cajun record to be released formed one of the first string bands as the accordion began to lose favor during the 1930s. His Three Aces recorded early country and swing tunes, some translated, some not. His "Dans ton coeur tu aimes un autre" was a thinly disguised translation of the traditional "Columbus Stockade Blues," "Personne m'aime pas" is a French takeoff on "Nobody's Darling But Mine." Nathan Abshire was another who adapted Anglo-American to produce new songs for the Cajun repertoire. His "Mon

coeur me fait mal," for example, was a simplified translation of "I Don't Hurt Anymore," and his classic waltz "La Valse de Bélisaire" was based on Roy Acuff's "A Precious Jewel."

By the mid-1930s, Cajuns were reluctantly, though inevitably, becoming Americanized. America, caught in the "melting pot" ideology, tried to homogenize its diverse ethnic and cultural elements. At the national level, America had fought in a major war which for the first time divided most of the world into camps. National leaders like Teddy Roosevelt felt that there was a danger that this country, which was built of people from all over the world, might blow apart itself. Roosevelt insisted that there was no such thing as a "hyphenated American" and urged members of various ethnic and national groups to conform to America or to leave it.

Part of this conformity included learning English, for Roosevelt insisted that there was "room for but one language in this country and that is the English language, for we must assure that the crucible produces Americans and not some random dwellers in a polyglot boardinghouse." The French language, native to the Cajuns and their music, was banned from schools thoughout South Louisiana as a result of state board of education policy in 1916. This action was confirmed by the new state
constitution of 1921 which stripped the French language of its historical official status. Speaking French was not only against the rules, it became increasingly unpopular as Cajuns attempted to escape the stigma attached to their culture.

In the 1930s the efforts of another Roosevelt to ease the national

pain of Great Depression brought more changes to South Louisiana. Work projects brought a generation of young Cajuns out into the rest of America. A new money-based economy brought the Cajuns into the marketplace where they needed to speak English to do business with America. The new highways and bridges built by Huey Long and improved transportation opened previously isolated areas to the rest of the country. Money from the budding oil industry brought the sons of sharecroppers off the farm and into the industrial workplace. With regular paychecks for the first time in the history of their families, many Cajuns were able to afford modern conveniences like refrigerators and radios which diminished the need for traditional gatherings like boucheries and house dances. They bought automobiles which allowed them to extend their sphere of activity.

The Cajuns had always learned from their neighbors and their neighbors had always learned from them. Now, however, the immigration of Anglo-American outsiders to Cajun country was too much too fast. These newcomers were no longer motivated to learn the native language and the culture of the land. At the same time, the Cajuns understanding of the world was greatly enlarged and they began to understand that they should learn the ways of the land, in the larger context of America. The Americanization of the Cajuns was finally underway in earnest.

These social and cultural changes of the 1930s and 1940s were clearly reflected in the recorded music of the period. The slick programming on the radio and later television inadvertently undermined the comparatively unpolished traditional sounds and forced them underground. The previously dominant accordion, for example, faded completely from the popular scene, partly because the old style music had lost popularity and partly because the instruments, hitherto manufactured in Germany, were unavailable.

As the western swing and bluegrass sounds from Texas and Tennessee swept the country, string bands which imitated the music of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys and copied Bill Monroe's high lonesome sound sprouted across South Louisiana. Among the early leaders in this new trend were the Hackberry Ramblers (with Luderin Darbonne on fiddle) who recorded new, lilting versions of what had begun to emerge as the classic Cajun repertoire, such as "Jolie Blonde." They also performed new compositions such as "Une piastre ici, une piastre là-bas, a song which shows what it means to live in a money-based economy caught in the throes of the Great Depression:

Quand j'ai eu vingt et un ans
Mon père m'a dit que j'étais dedans.
"C'est l'heure que t'arrêtes de dépenser
Une piastre ici, une piastre là-bas."

(From "Une piastre ici, une piastre là-bas," as performed by the Hackberry Ramblers, Louisiana Cajun Music , vol. III, Old Timey Records)

Freed from the limitations imposed by the accordion, string bands readily absorbed various outside influences. Darbonne's Ramblers were

the first to use electrical amplification systems. Dancers across South Louisiana were shocked in the mid-1930s to hear music which came not only from the bandstand, but also from the opposite end of the dance hall through speakers. In places not yet reached by the rural eletrification project (REA), these early sound systems were powered only by a model T idling behind the building. The electric steel guitar eventually replaced the acoustic dobro or National steel guitar, and trap drums were added to the standard instrumentation as Cajuns continued to experiment with new sounds borrowed from Anglo-American musicians.

An important stylistic change occured in the fiddle music component of Cajun music. Amplification made it unnecessary for fiddlers to bear down with the bow in order to be heard, so many of them developed a lighter, lilting touch, producing an airier, almost glib sound which was very different from the intense, mournful earlier styles. Cajun fiddlers were also greatly influenced by Anglo-American string bands and they began to include bits of the repertoire of those groups in their performances, including songs like "The Maiden's Prayer" and "The Ranger's Waltz," lively fancy fiddling tunes like "Ragtime Annie" and "Down South," and popular radio tunes like "If You Don't See Your Mama Every Night" and "Kentucky" (Performed by Varise Connor and Lionel Leleux, collection of Barry Jean Ancelet, USL/FA) Undoubtedly the most popular Cajun musician of his day, Harry Choates was born near Rayne, Acadia parish, but like so many of his countrymen, he moved to East Texas with his family to work in the ship building and oil boom of the 1940s. this move greatly influenced his music. In songs such as the

"Austin Special," "Grand Texas," and the "Port Arthur Blues," he helped to develop the "tu m'as quitté pour t'en aller au Grand Texas" theme which was to become ubiquitous in modern Cajun music. Choates also sprinkled his songs like "Louisiana Boogie" with English terms to reach a larger audience:

Tu m'as quitté pour t'en aller, Pour t'en aller, mais chère, si loin,
C'est pour faire le boogie-woogie,
Faire le boogie-woogie,
Après faire le boogie-woogie.
Je connais ça sera pas pour longtemps. Tu honky-tonk ici, tu honky-tonk là-bas.
Tu honky-tonk, tu honky-tonk, tu honky-tonk tout le temps.
T'es après faire le boogie-woogie,
Après faire le boogie-woogie
Après faire le boogie-woogie. Je connais ça sera pas pour longtemps.

(From Harry Choates , Arhoolie Records; reissues of older 78s)

His popularity carried him as far west as Austin, in the heart of Anglo-Texas, on regular weekend dance jobs. His simplified interpretations of older Cajun standards like "Jolie Blonde" and "Pauvre Hobo" were regional hits, even attracting some national attention, and became the standard versions performed by bands throughout South Louisiana. He also recorded many country fiddle standards like "Rubber Dolly."

Other bands recorded bilingual songs, reflecting a gradual gravitation toward the English language. In 1947, for example, a Cajun group ironically called the Oklahoma Tornadoes released "Dans la prison:"

Well, I left for Louisiana about a year ago,
Going to Texas, travelling with a show.
I landed in old Houston doing mighty fine,

Until I met that woman, and now I'm doing time.

Dans la prison, la hell avec ça.
Moi, je connais ça sera longtemps.
Dans la prison, la hell avec ça.
Moi, je m'en reviens dans vingt-quatre ans...

(From Louisiana Cajun Music , vol. IV, Arhoolie Records; reissues of older 78s)

Darbonne's group, which had recorded French swing tunes as the Hackberry Ramblers, recorded English country tunes as the Riverside Ramblers (a name they acquired when their radio show was sponsored by Montgomery Ward's Riverside tires). This version of the group featured the singing of Joe Werner on regional hits such as "Wondering" (which predated Webb Pierce's national hit by a few years). The transition was nearly complete; recorded Cajun music showed increasingly discomfort with the French language and traditional sounds. Even Joe Falcon's wife Cléoma joined the move away from the roots, recording a version of "Hand Me Down My Walking Cane" in 1947 entirely in English.

By the late 1940s, the music recorded by commercial producers signalled an unmistakable tendency toward Americanization. Yet, an undercurrent of traditional music persisted. The accordion, for example, completely absent from popular recordings during this period, was played on back porches and for family and friends at house dances and on holidays like Easter, Christmas and New Year's Day. Older songs were preserved in the memories of those who continued to hum, whistle and sing them informally. This traditional foundation would resurface in the recordings of Iry Lejeune, a young accordion player and singer from the Pointe Noire area south of Church Point, in Acadia Parish.

Greatly influenced by the earlier recordings of Amédé Ardoin and by the music of his own uncles and cousins, among them Angelas and Steven Lejeune, he tagged along with Virgil Bozman's Oklahoma Tornadoes in 1948 to record "La Valse du Pont d'Amour," in the intensely soulful turn of the century style and in French.

Hé, petite fille,
Moi, je me vois
Après partir
Mais m'en aller donc te rejoindre.
O chère petite fille,
Quand même tu voudrais
T'en revenir, petit monde,
Regarde donc, je veux plus te voir.
Hé, tu m'as dit,
Petite fille, criminelle,
Tu sais toi, tu voulais plus
M'aimer malheureuse.
Tu connais, petite fille,
Que moi, j'ai pris ça dur,
Pris ça assez dur
Que moi, j'ai pris les grands chemins...

(From Iry Lejeune: The Greatest , Goldband Records)

Skeptics wondered at his forsaking current trends, but the recording, an unexpected success, presaged a revival of the earlier styles. Iry Lejeune became a pivotal figure in a revival fueled by the return of homesick GIs seeking to soothe their mal de pays in a hot, cultural bath. All over the country, soldiers wanted to eat home cooking. In South Louisiana that meant rice and gravy and gumbo, no more potatoes. And they wanted to hear homemade music. In South Louisiana, that meant Cajun music, no more hit parade for a while. These soldiers literally populated the dance halls where they drank and danced to forget the horrors of the war. Dance halls which provided traditional music flourished, and musicians such as Lawrence Walker,

Austin Pitre, and Nathan Abshire brought their abandoned accordions out of the closet and once again recorded old-style Cajun music. Local recording companies picked up the slack left by the national producers who had turned exclusively to widely marketable performers by then. Though bearing the marks of Americanization, Cajun music was making a dramatic comeback just as interest in the culture and language quickened before the 1955 Acadian bicentennial celebration, led by politicians like Dudley LeBlanc and Roy Theriot.

In the early 1950s, many dance bands performed as often as seven and eight times a week. Some of these groups developed a tight, well-orchestrated, dance band style, keeping the successive eight or sixteen bar instrumental rides learned from swing and bluegrass music. (The typical pattern of instrumental rides which developed in Cajun music was: accordion lead, accordion break, vocal lead, steel guitar shuffle, fiddle break, fiddle lead, accordion break, accordion lead...) Groups incorporated palatable elements from varous new styles, including early rock-and-roll, to develop new sounds.

Even the names of many of these revived groups reflected the enduring influence of their brush with Americanization. Lawrence Walker's group was called the Wandering Aces. Austin Pitre's was the Evangeline Playboys, after their native Evangeline Parish. Nathan Abshire called his band the Pine Grove Boys, after their regional hit, the "Pine Grove Blues."

Some began performing on local radio stations; others, such as Aldus Roger and the Lafayette Playboys and Happy Fats and the Mariné Band, were even featured on area television. Most bands were composed

of musicians who made a living from other regular jobs, but a few, such as Doug Kershaw, became professionals who quickly realized that they should perform in English if they were to attract an audience large enough to support them. Kershaw recycled older Cajun tunes to produce new songs with English lyrics, like his "I'm Not Strong Enough," which is based on "La Valse du bambocheur," and his "Cajun Stripper, a jazzed up version of the "Bosco Stomp." He developed a small, national cult, even appearing on the immensely popular "Ed Sullivan Show."

SWAMP POP

Swamp pop was a tempting alternative and Cajun music was again straying far afield from its traditional sources. Deliberate efforts would be necessary, in Dewey Balfa's words, "to water the roots so that the tree would not die." The needed impulse came from the national level. Alan Lomax, a member of the Newport Folk Foundation, had become interested in Cajun and Creole music while collecting traditional music across the country for the Library of Congress in the 1930s. In the manner prescribed by activist ethnomusicologist Charles Seeger, Lomax sent "cultural guided missiles" to document and encourage the preservation of the music during the 1950s. Harry Oster, a professor of English at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, recorded a musical spectrum which ranged from unaccompanied ballads to contemporary dance tunes, especially in Evangeline and Vermilion Parishes. His collection, which stressed the evoluton of Cajun music, attracted the attention of local activists like Paul Tate and Revon Reed.

The work of Harry Oster and Alan Lomax caught the imagination of the Newport board, and fieldworkers Ralph Rinzler and Mike Seeger were sent to find Cajun musicians for the festival. Cajun dance bands had played at the National Folk Festival as early as the 1930s (when Lawrence Walker accompanied the Broussard family band to the festival in Dallas), but little echo of these performances reached Louisiana. Rinzler and Seeger, seeking the gutsy roots of Cajun music, invited Gladius Thibodeaux, Louis "Vinesse" Lejeune (a cousin of Iry), and Dewey Balfa to represent Louisiana at the 1964 Newport Folk Festival. There alongside nationally known folk revivalists like Joan Baez, Peter, Paul and Mary, and Bob Dylan, they performed the turn-of-the-century, unamplified music which made the Louisiana cultural extablishment uneasy. These "unrefined" sounds embarassed the upwardly mobile "genteel Acadians" who barely tolerated the more polished sounds of popular dance bands like Belton Richard and the Musical Aces. They considered the music chosen for Newport festival crude, "nothing but chanky-chank." An editorial by Burton Grindstaff in the Opelousas Daily World (October 20, 1965) unabashedly illustrated this sentiment:

> "Cajuns brought some mighty fine things down from Nova Scotia with them, including their jolly selves, but their so-called music is one thing I wish they hadn't.
> "The first time my sensitive ears were shattered by the dissonant squeal of a Cajun musician was in Eunice back in 1946. I was told that an acquaintance of mine, a fellow who seemed to be normal in other respects, was going to play an accordion "Cajun style" at some kind of local program. I was foolish enough to look forward to the event, and even to think I might be in on the discovery of something great that had been hidden from the rest of the country all these years. I broke through a window after the first stanza, went home and

doused my head in a bucket of water to drown out the sound."

and so on. He ended his column with a prediction:

> "I suppose there will be no containing them if they get a really bad needle on one of those records the Newport festival people took back with them and some of these modern folk music people get an earful.
> "All we can do is sit back and wait for the verdict from Newport, scared stiff. I am not sure Cajun music is on trial in Newport. It may be us. Their verdict could subject us to tortures like the world has never known before."

This remarkable tirade was a fairly accurate assessment of the opinion of a certain class of Cajuns and Creoles. Despite Mr. Grindstaff's grim predictions, however, the Newport organizers were intent on showing the beauty and impact of root music. Their instinct proved well-founded as huge crowds gave the old-time music standing ovations. Two members of the Louisiana group were simply impressed. The third was Dewey Balfa, a fiddler and vocalist in a family band called The Musical Brothers who had accompanied Thibodeaux and Lejeune as a last minute replacement on guitar. He was so moved by the experience that he returned to Louisiana determined to bring the message home.

Dewey began working on a small scale, among his friends and family in Mamou, Basile and Eunice. Rinzler, who continued his fieldwork through the 1960s, recognized Dewey's budding activism and urged him on. The Newport Folk Festival, under the guidance of Lomax, routed money and fieldworkers into the area through the newly established Louisiana Folk Foundation. Financial support and outside approval brought about a gradual change on the inside. Local activists such as Paul Tate, Revon Reed, Catherine and Edward Blanchet, Milton and Patricia Rickels became involved in preserving the music, language, and culture. Dewey Balfa did not have the educational base of these members

of the foundation, but his innate command of the material more than made up for this difficiency, and his clear sense of mission made him an invaluable member of this task force.

With the help of the Newport Folk Festival Foundation, this group organized traditional contests at local events such as the Abbeville Dairy Festival, the Opelousas Yambilee, and the Crowley Rice Festival. Special concerts were presented so that people would have the opportunity to listen to their music without the distractions of a smoke-filled dance hall.

Eventually Dewey convinced Swallow Records, a local company, to release a recording of traditional Cajun music alongside its more modern listings. Superbly performed ancient songs like "La Valse du bambocheur" and "Parlez-nous à boire" which had attracted Rinzler's attention to the Balfa Brothers sound as a Newport scout, also proved popular among the heritage-minded Cajuns of the late 1960s, and led to many subsequent albums on Swallow and other labels, including Arhoolie (from California), Rounder (Massachusetts), Folkways (New York), Expression Spontanée (France), and Sonet (England). Perhaps Dewey's most important contribution was to set the example of look back to recycle the best of the traditional material. Soon other musicians began searching through their memories to revive old songs instead of only translating outside sources for new material.

In 1968, the state of Louisiana officially recognized the Cajun cultural revival which had been brewing under the leadership of certain musicians and political leaders such as Dewey Balfa and Dudley LeBlanc. In that year, it created the Council for the Development of French in

Louisiana (CODOFIL) which, under the chairmanship of James Domengeaux, began its efforts on political, psychological and educational fronts to erase the stigma Louisianians had long attached to the French language and culture. The creation of French classes in elementary schools began to reverse the policy which had barred the language from the schoolgrounds.

Early in the development of CODOFIL's political strategy, Domengeaux had decided that his efforts should be concentrated in the classroom, explaining that if the language could be saved, the rest would follow. He quickly changed his approach, however, when he realized, as he later put it, "that language and culture are inseparable." Influenced by Rinzler and Balfa, CODOFIL organized a first Tribute to Cajun Music festival in 1974 with a three-hour concert designed to present an historical overview of Cajun music from its origins to modern styles. The echo of Newport had finally come home. Dewey Balfa's message of cultural self-esteem was heard by over 12,000 enthusiastic participants, and was heard again and again as the festival subsequently became an annual celebration of Cajun music and culture.

Dewey's message was complex and aimed in many directions at once. On the one hand, the festival not only provided exposure for the musicians but presented them as cultural heroes and in the same motion made them available to the ones who needed them most. Many young performers were attracted to the revalidated Cajun music scene and became interested in playing the music of their fathers and grandfathers. On the other hand, local French movement officials

observing from backstage realized the impact of the grassroots and began to stress the native Louisiana French culture in the revival of French in Louisiana.

Balfa's dogged pursuit of cultural recognition carried him further than he had ever expected. In 1977, he received a Folk Artists in the Schools grant from the National Endowment for the Arts through Atlanta's Southern Folk Revival project to bring his message into elementary school classrooms. He became a regular on the national folk festival touring circuit along with many other of his colleagues. Dewey has given workshops in such places as the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress, New York, New York, Port Townsend, Washington, and Paris, France. In 1982, Dewey was presented with the National Heritage Award and in 1986 his album Souvenirs was nominated for a Grammy Award in the Ethnic Music category. In 1987, despite his protests that he had little formal education, he was finally convinced to accept a temporary position to teach courses in Cajun music and culture at the University of California at Fresno.

Cajun music seems likely to live for at least another generation. The renewed creativity within the tradition (as opposed to the simple imitation of outside styles) makes earlier predictions of imminent disintegration seem hasty. Recent compositions by musicians such as D. L. Menard, Belton Richard and Ivy Dugas continue to enlarge the stock repertoire of contemporary dance bands. Menard's "La Porte d'en arrière," which has already become a modern classic, reiterates the enfant perdu theme encountered in "Les Barres de la prison," but treats it in a humorous vein:

Moi et la belle, on avait été-z-au bal,
On a passé dans tous les honky tonks.
On s'en a revenu le lendemain matin,
Le jour était après se casser.
J'ai passé dedans la porte d'en arrière.
Après-midi, moi, j'ai été-z-au village
Et je m'ai saoulé que je pouvais plus marcher.
Ils m'ont ramené back à la maison,
Il y avait de la compagnie, c'était du monde étranger.
J'ai passé dedans la porte d'en arrière.
Mon vieux père, un soir quand j'ai arrivé,
Il a essayé de changer mon idée.
Je l'ai pas écouté, moi, j'avais trop la tête dure.
"Un jour à venir, mon nègre, tu vas avoir du regret.
T'as passé dedans la porte d'en arrière."
J'ai eu un tas d'amis tant que j'avais de l'argent.
Asteur j'ai plus d'argent, mai ils voulont plus me voir.
J'ai été dan le village et moi, je m'ai is dans le tracas.
La loi m'a ramassé.
Moi, je suis parti dans la prison.
On va passer dedans la porte d'en arrière.

(D. L. Menard, D. L. Menard, Swallow Records)

On the eastern side of the Atchafalaya Basin, the accordion was briefly popular but faded from the scene during the 1930s and 1940s and did not return after World War II as it did on the southwestern prairies. There is French music along Bayous Terrebonne and Lafourche, but it is highly influenced by country and rock sounds. The tradition of the chansonnier is especially strong in this region, as heard in the rich baritone songs of singers like Vin Bruce and L. J. Foret. Many songs are adapted from the English, like Vin Bruce's "La Priére de la jeune fille" ("The Maiden's Prayer"). Even recent compositions, like L. J. Foret's "Le Chemin des coeurs cassés" have a distinct country flavor. Swamp pop stars like Joe Barry and Gene Rodrigue have also provided a rock-influenced sound for the region.

On the prairies, young Cajuns, discovering local models besides

country and rock stars, began performing the music of their heritage. Yet they did not reject modern sounds while adopting older ones. Michael Doucet has incorporated jazz and classical music styles into the carefully researched sound of his group Beausoleil in songs such as "Les Barres de la prison" and "Contredanse de Mamou." Zachary Richard brought country and pop music trends into his renditions of traditional music like "Travailler, c'est trop dur" and "L'Arbre est dans ses feuilles" and into his own compositions like "Marcher le plancher" and "Ballade de Beausoleil." One of Richard's most important contributions was the discovery of new outlets. He found a way to support his career as a professional musician singing in French by reaching out to Quebec and France, where he has had several gold records.

Young performers are gradually making their presence known on the Cajun music scene, replacing older musicians on the weekend dance hall circuit and representing traditional Cajun music at local and national festivals. Some, like Wayne Toups and his ZydeCajun band, are constantly innovating daring new sounds and styles from recombinations of old and new elements. A band called Mamou is even experimenting with a combination of Cajun and rock without accordions and fiddles. Others, like Jason Frey and Robert Jardell, express a strong interest in reverently preserving the styles and repertoires of their mentors. Yet, Even these constantly recharge past songs with the vitality of the present. Even some of the most conservative elements in Cajun music, like Dewey Balfa himself, understand that tradition is not a product but a process and continue to produce new songs from within the culture. While performing at the 1985 Smithsonian Festival of American

Folklife, Devey surprised the audience by announcing that he was going to play a few new songs from his Souvenir album. He went on to explain: "Cajun music is like a tree. Its roots have to be watered or it will die. But watering the roots is not all. If a tree is alive, it will grow, and that growth is important, too. Most of the songs I play are about a hundred years old. I'm interested in preserving Cajun music. I've dedicated my life to try to assure that there will be lots of Cajun musicians in another hundred years. But that's not enough. Someone has to provide them with songs to play that will be about a hundred years old then, so I've composed a few that I hope will still be around then." The audience was relieved to hear that his new songs sounded like traditional Cajun music. They sounded that way because they are traditional.

Purists who would resist new instrumentation and styles neglect to consider that change and innovation have always been an integral part of Cajun music. Those who want to freeze the tradition at any point lack an historical perspective and share a basic misunderstanding of the importance of improvisation and the creolization process in French Louisiana in general and in Cajun music in particular. The same approach would have barred the borrowing of Anglo-American ballads and Spanish tunes in the eighteenth century, the introduction of the accordion in the nineteenth century, the adding of other instruments in the 1940s and 1950s, the influence of the blues, the addition of swing and country sounds along the way. Today the blending and cultural fusion at the heart of the development of Cajun culture continue to be essential to its music.

MAKING INSTRUMENTS FOR CAJUN AND CREOLE MUSICIANS

Barry Jean Ancelet and Mathé Allain

(Note: parts of this report are from an article by the author which appeared in the catalog for "The Tools of Cajun Music," exhibit presented by the Lafayette Natural History Museum in 1984. This exhibition catalog is still available from the Museum and may be useful as a booklet on this subject.)

Making music with fiddles and accordions, guitars and triangles, spoons and scrubboards, Cajun and Creole musicians have become culture heroes as South Louisianans reaffirm their pride in their musical tradition. But the unsung heroes are the traditional instrument makers who have provided performers with the tools of their trade, particularly those who plied their craft at a time when store-bought instruments were either unavailable or prohibitively expensive. Many of these have become master craftsmen who produce some of the finest accordions, violins, triangles and frottoirs in the world, contributing to the survival of both the music and its culture.

Cajun music, as we know it today, is a gumbo of Spanish, German, Anglo-American, Scots-Irish, native American and Afro-Caribbean influences, but the basic roux was western French tradition which utilized brass instruments like the cornet; reeds like the bombarde: variants of the bagpipe family like the biniou and the cabrette; and stringed instruments like the violin. It is unlikely that the early French settlers brought such delicate instruments to the Louisiana frontier or that the Acadians had any in 1765 when they arrived in

Louisiana after ten years of wandering. But, it is said, the Nova Scotia exiles danced to reels à bouche, wordless dance music made by their voices alone. By 1780 a colonial succession record includes a violin, and in 1785 a Spanish commandant reports a fiddle and clarinet player named Préjean. Within a generation, musicians, using imported and home-made instruments, were playing reels, contredanses, waltzes and two-steps for house parties.

It is often said that the only difference between a fiddle and a violin is the music played on them. Thus, Itzak Perlman's Stradivarius became a fiddle when he performed bluegrass during a recent television special; conversely, many Cajun fiddlers use instruments which would be called violins in a symphony orchestra. Some are fine old Italian, German, or French instruments which reached Louisiana in the migrations of American society. Others were made in America by artisans who patterned their work on that of European masters. Still others were made locally by craftsmen for their own use as well as for their neighbors and friends.

Research for an exhibit sponsored by the Lafayette Natural History Museum in 1984 uncovered Lousiana fiddlemakers as far back as the nineteenth century. Some of these were homemade imitations. Some were fine instruments. Others were harder to place. A blind craftsman from the Marais Bouleur region near Bosco, in St. Landry Parish, is said to have made pre-Cremonan style triangular instruments.

Fiddlemakers often had to overcome great difficulties in the pursuit of their craft, using pieces of broken bottles as scrapers, for example, until they could acquire proper tools. Young musicians who

could not buy or borrow instruments sometimes improvised their first fiddles from wooden cigar boxes, using cypress slats from the barn for necks and bones for pegs. Many faced maternal wrath for unravelling window screen to make strings and sneaking thread from the sewing box to hair bows made of bent branches. Sometimes, they even raided the family horse for a few strands from its mane or tail. Wedisson Reed of Eunice has whittled instruments from cypress planks and eventually adapted his craft to include top and back plates of spray-painted formica. Paul Devillier of Arnaudville used two-by-fours for his first fiddle and interior paneling for the second. Home-made instruments such as these, born of stubborn desire, symbolize the Cajuns' passion for making music.

The earliest known instrument-quality violin maker was Emar Andrepont of Prairie Ronde who made over sixty violins around the turn of this century, apparently patterned after the work of I. Benoit. One of the New Orleans craftsman's instruments was discovered in the Andrepont family collection. Andrepont used some rather unorthodox techniques. For example, instead of carving his back and top plates from a thick block, he shaped them by soaking them in a well and bending them to his pattern. He was a comfortable landowner and apparently made his violins for pleasure, not for money. He consistently refused to sell his instruments, giving them instead to family members who proved equally disinterested in parting with the instruments. They considered them family heirlooms and still own the entire collection.

Regional fiddlemakers have learned through trial and error, books,

and contact with other fiddlemakers to produce instruments of excellent quality with backs, ribs, necks and scrolls of curly and bird's eye maple imported from Germany and Czechoslovakia, tops of fine-grained European and Canadian spruce, and fingerboards and pegs of African ebony. Some have experimented with indigenous woods; Lionel Leleux has carefully cured rare swamp maple plates for a series of Louisiana instruments, and Adner Ortego uses an interesting collection of salvaged woods including magnolia, black gum, cherry and walnut to obtain a rich variety of colors and grain patterns. Slender rounds of wood--the best come from the Pernambuco district of Brazil--are fashioned into bows which are then haired with hanks from horses' manes.

The percussion instruments used in Cajun and Creole music have diverse historical and practical origins. Many were adapted from anything that would make noise when rubbed or struck together. Blacksmiths produced petits fers, triangles of medieval French tradition. Reshaped hay or rice rake tines made the best instruments. The springy tempering of the tines gave them their characteristic clear ringing sound which travelled far beyond the range of melodic instruments and which often provided the only music heard by dancers at the back of the dance hall. Today, triangles are made by dozens of craftsmen, some of whom have perfected even these simple instruments with new techniques for tuning them and preserving their temper.

Percussion instruments were often nothing more than ordinary household items pressed into temporary service to make music. Sometimes, stylized versions of these later became pure instruments.

Rasps and notched gourds used in Afro-Caribbean music were replaced by washboards, called frottoirs, rubbed with thimbles, spoons or bottle openers. Later, tinsmiths corrugated sheets of metal to create abstract frottoirs far removed from their washroom origins. Carved cow bones and bent soupspoons also served to keep rhythm. These had to be held just right in the hands and consequently were difficult to play. This was sometimes solved by enterprising musicians who fixed the pieces into the proper position with screws or rivets. A #3 tub became a one-string bass with the help of an old broom handle and a piece of baling twine. This process required drilling a hole in the bottom of the tub, thereafter rendering it useful only as an instrument. Young fiddlers learned bowing and fingering techniques while keeping rhythm on an older performer's strings with long thin wooden dowels called fiddlesticks. Paired dowels of the perfect thickness were often put aside as instruments, never to be used as pegs.

Introduced between 1900 and 1920, the guitar was used primarily to provide chords as percussive accompaniment. Several of today's oldest musicians insist that a black Creole named Steve was the first guitar player they remember seeing in the area. In 1928, Cléoma Falcon played a National Steel guitar as her husband Joe played the accordion and sang "Allons à Lafayette," the first Cajun record ever released. By then, it had become relatively easy to acquire instruments from mail order catalogs, though young guitar players still improvised instruments with planks and wire strings. One of the first Cajun guitar players, Warnes Schexnayer of Crowley, began making violins in 1921. He later became interested in making guitars and learned to enhance them

with inlaid hand-carved pieces of native Louisiana abalone shells as well as imported ivory. Another guitar-maker, Harold Romero of New Iberia, contributed to the development of the electric version of the instrument and is credited with several patents.

Pedal steel guitars, an electrified version of the dobro, have come to play an important melodic role in contemporary dance bands. They entered Louisiana French music tradition during the 1930s and 1940s when Cajuns were electrifying their stringbands to play western swing. These complex instruments were adapted but not made here until Milton Guilbeau, a plumbing supplier from Lafayette, began building pedal steels using materials available to him in his Coburn warehouse, such as chrome faucet handles, conduits and shut-off valves.

Invented in Vienna in 1828, the diatonic accordion rapidly became one of the most popular folk instruments in the western world, primarily because of its durability and versatility. Self-accompanying bass chords made it a convenient, and loud, one-man band. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, early versions of the instrument were brought into Louisiana by German-Jewish retailers, such as Mervine Khan of Rayne, who obtained them from New York importers, such as Buegeleisen and Jacobsen. These first imports were bulky, often with several rows of buttons; their cheap tin reeds were set in beeswax and difficult to keep in tune; their flimsy bellows lost air and tore easily. After World War I, a simplified version with a single row of buttons appeared in Louisiana. Though far from perfect, (wooden parts were painted black to cover flaws), these greatly improved Monarchs, Sterlings, and later Eagles easily outclassed earlier instruments and

quickly replaced them among serious musicians. They were smaller, lighter, and louder. These accordions dominated Cajun bands by their sheer volume. Their steel reeds were more durable and easier to keep tuned, and their sturdier bellows better able to survive the syncopated exuberance of the times. Limited to a total of twenty notes (ten pushing and ten pulling) arranged on a simple diatonic scale, plus two pairs of accompanying bass chords, they also tended to simplify melodies and arrangements.

In the late 1930s, German factories converted to war production and stopped making accordions. In South Louisiana, the dearth of available instruments coincided with social changes brought about by the Americanization of the local culture. Traditional bands, formerly built around the dominant accordion sound, were replaced by western swing string bands as Cajuns and Creoles gravitated toward Anglo-American culture. After World War II, however, returning GIs crowded the dance halls. Performers like Iry Lejeune, Nathan Abshire, Lawrence Walker, and Austin Pitre, brought out their long-neglected accordions to satisfy the brand new demand for old-time music. Musicians without accordions needed instruments. Post-war German accordions were so inferior to Monarchs, Sterlings and Eagles that the older instruments which had survived a decade of neglect commanded premium prices. The few to be found were carefully refurbished and jealously treasured. This small supply exhausted, the ever-increasing demand was filled by local craftsmen who learned to build new accordions by restoring old ones.

The first of these craftsmen, Sidney Brown of Lake Charles, made

his instruments of ordinary wood and even masonite, painting them black to copy the "little black gems" from Germany. Valentin Lopez, also of Lake Charles, named his "Starling" accordion in unabashed imitation of the German Sterling. The earliest Louisiana accordion makers used the bellows and reeds from post-war Hohner instruments, limiting themselves to the quality of the materials they recycled.

Marc Savoy of Eunice developed an early passion for the instrument. He restored a few, began building them, and realized that his instruments could only be as good as his materials. He began using maple and other fine hardwoods, eliminating the need for black paint. The outward appearance of his stained accordions shook the faith of those who blindly trusted the "little black" German accordions, but Savoy waged war on black paint and eventually succeeded in establishing natural finishes as the ideal. With tongue in cheek, he did eventually make black accordions, but from polished African ebony.

Yet for all attention Marc Savoy's finishes received, these changes were minor when compared to those he made on the inside of the instrument. A gifted accordion player himself, he quickly realized that he and most of his colleagues easily outplayed the early versions of his "Acadian" accordion. He began importing better quality reeds and bellows from Italy and eventually redesigned the inside of the accordion. His ingenious use of decibel meters, electronic tuners, pressure gauges, and his mother's vacuum cleaner, led to important innovations in the basic design of the diatonic accordion. A company in Italy has recently begun mass-producing a version of Savoy's Acadian accordion, under licence from the Eunice craftsman. Savoy has also

begun producing a double-row zydeco accordion under his Acadian trademark. Today there are several dozen Louisiana craftsmen making accordions which are used not only locally but world-wide, from California to New York, Canada to Mexico and Europe to Austalia. Their trademarks underscore their roots: Acadian, Cajun, Creole, Evangeline, Teche, Magnolia, to name but a few. Many have followed Marc Savoy's lead, experimenting with native hardwoods and shell inlays to produce instruments of beauty and quality. It is generally acknowledged today that some of the best diatonic accordions in the world are made in South Louisiana.

MAKERS OF CAJUN ACCORDION IN LOUISIANA

* Major Accordion Makers by number (work fulltime, fabricate parts, except for reeds)
* Minor Accordion Makers by number (work part-time and purchase most parts)

0 20
MILES

Data: Marc Savoy

FROM GRAND TEXAS TO JAMBALAYA AND BACK AGAIN

The Symbiotic Relationship between Cajun and American Music

Barry Jean Ancelet

Like jazz, rock and the blues, Cajun music was born and raised in America. French, Acadian, Spanish, German, Native-American, Afro-Caribbean and Anglo-American cultures stewed together in South Louisiana's nineteenth-century version of the melting pot to produce a new culture which we now call Cajun. In the early part of this century, Teddy Roosevelt's colonial expansionism and World War I combined to fuel the nationalistic fervor which sought to homogenize this country. Clearly, South Louisiana must understand and accept its role as a minority in the greater context of America. Some of the obvious benefits were education, mobility and the right to participate in the free enterprise system. Unfortunately, the Americanization process lacked a little in subtlety. In South Louisiana, the French language was inadvertently trampled in a frontal assault on illiteracy. Those who could joined the headlong rush toward the language of the future and of the marketplace, becoming more American than the Yanks. The black gold rush fueled an economic boom which brought the Cajuns out of the nineteenth century just in time for the Great Depression. All that came from the outside was imitated and internalized as quickly as possible.

Folklorists and ethnomusicologists have generally regarded the Anglo-American influences on Cajun music as symptomatic of a fatal illness. Yet those who predicted the ultimate demise of Cajun music in

the face of Americana during the 1930s and 40s, when country music and western swing replaced Cajun music in the dance halls, find themselves forced to repeat their predictions today after the rocking 50s, the twisting 60s, Beatlemania, reggae, disco and new wave. The culture and its music have proved to be much more complex and resilient than it was thought at first glance. Looking back with the perspective of history, it is clear that the fire under the regional melting pot was never really turned off and that, taken in moderation, the Anglo-American influence was no poison, just another ingredient adding spice to the Cajun music gumbo.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Cajun singers and musicians heard the songs of their Anglo-American neighbors and added some of them to the repertoire. In the most ancient unaccompanied tradition, it is difficult to tell which version came first. In South Louisiana, the English folksong, "The Old Drunk and His Wife," is called "Ayoû ce que t'es parti, mon bon vieux mari:"

Ayoû ce que t'es parti, mon bon vieux mari?
Ayoû ce que t'es parti, ça qu'on appelle l'amour?
Ayoû ce que t'es parti, mon bon vieux mari,
Le meilleur buveur du pays?

Je suis parti au village.

Quoi-ce t'es parti faire, mon bon vieux mari?
Quoi-ce t'es parti faire, ça qu'on appelle l'amour?
Quoi-ce t'es parti faire, mon bon vieux mari,
Le meilleur buveur du pays?

Je suis parti me saouler...

(from "Mon Bon Vieux Mari," as performed by Inez Catalon, recorded by Barry Jean Ancelet, 1977)

"A Paper (or Packet) of Pins," is called "Un papier d'épingles:"

Je te donnerais un papier d'épingles,
Si c'est comme ça que l'amitié commence.
Je voudrais me marier avec toi, toi, toi.
Je voudrais me marier avec toi.

J'accepterais pas ton papier d'épingles,
Si c'est comme ça que l'amitié commence.
Je veux pas me marier avec toi, toi, toi.
Je veux pas me marier avec toi...

(from "Un Papier d'épingles," as performed by Lula Landry, recorded by Barry Jean Ancelet, 1977)

In 1934, Alan Lomax recorded Luneda Comeaux of New Iberia singing "Charmant Billy," clearly a variant of "Billy Boy."

D'ayoû tu viens, Charmant Billy?
Billy, garçon, d'ayoû tu viens,
Charmant Billy, Billy, garçon?

Je deviens, oui, de la ville,
C'est pour voir, o, la jeune fille.
C'est pour voir la jeune fille
Qui n'aide pas à sa maman...

(from "Charmant Billy," as performed by Luneda Comeaux on a 1934 Lomax recording)

That same year, Lomax also recorded "J'ai marié un ouvrier," a remarkable Louisiana French version of an old English ballad, "The Carpenter's Wife" (Child 243), sometimes called "James Harris" or "The Demon Lover," which tells the story of a woman who is lured away from her family by a sailor who betrays her in return. This Louisiana French

version preserves references to the "banks of the Tennessee" from an Americanized version of the song, first published in Philadelphia in 1858:

"J'ai marié un ouvrier, moi qui étais si vaillante fille,
Mais c'était de m'en dispenser sans attraper des reproches."

"Mais quitte ton ouvrier, et viens-t-en donc, c'est avec moi.
O viens-t-en donc, c'est avec moi dessus l'écore du Tennessee."

"Dessus l'écore du Tennessee, quoi-ce t'aurais pour m'entretenir?
Quoi-ce t'aurais pour m'entretenir dessus l'écore du Tennessee?"

"J'en ai de ces gros navires qui naviguent dessus l'eau
Et soi-disant pour t'opposer de travailler."

Au bout de trois jours, trois jours et trois semaines,
O la belle se mit à pleurer l'ennui de sa famille.

"Ne pleure donc pas, la belle, je t'achéterai une robe de soie jaune
Qu'elle soit mais la couleur de l'or et de l'argent."

"Je ne pleure non pas ton or, ni ton or ni ton argent,
Mais je pleure ma famille que j'ai laissée là-bas."

"Je t'ai pas tourjours dit, la belle, et quand ce bêtiment cêlerait,
O il aurait une carlet à plus jamais resourdre."

"Dessus l'écore du Tennessee, t'embrasserais ton cher et petit bébé.
O tu l'embrasserais à plus jamais le revoir."

(as sung by Lanese Vincent and Sidney Richard, Erath; AFS 27b1)

Some adaptations retained their original names. In 1934, Alan Lomax recorded about a dozen fiddle tunes by Wayne Perry of Indian Bayou. Of these, most were Cajun waltzes and two-steps, but some had titles like

"Chickens Cackling," and "Sitting on Top of the World," and one was a Virginia reel called "Old Joe Clark." This process continued well into the twentieth century as Cajun musicians adopted tunes they heard from travelling bands and on the radio. While recording Varise Connor of Lake Arthur, one of the smoothest of the old-time Cajun fiddlers, often surprises his audiences with tunes like "Down South," "The Carroll County Blues," "The Maiden's Prayer," and "If You Don't See Your Mama Every Night, You Won't Have No Mama At All."

Other tunes were assimilated, in whole or in part, and now bear French titles. Some of these have become Cajun dance music standards. In French Louisiana, for example, "The Arkansas Traveler" tune bears the name "Contredanse française," "Old Molly Hare" is the same as "Contredanse de Mamou," "Bonaparte Crossing the Rhine" (also known as "Wreck of the Old Number Nine") is like "Les Veuves de la coulée" and the melody line of "J'ai été-z-au bal hier au soir" sounds distinctly like the first phrase of "Get Along Home, Cindy."

The first commercial recordings of Cajun music, between 1928 and 1932, already bore the marks of Anglo-American tradition. Joe and Cleoma Falcon, the first to record in 1928, soon began including their own French translations of American popular tunes like "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes," and "Lu Lu's Back in Town:"

Moi, j'ai pour avoir mon suit bien repassé,
Recoudre un bouton sur mon gilet,
Parce qu'à soir j'ai pour bien me préparer.
Lulu est revenue dans le village.

J'ai pour me trouver un cinquant sous en quelque part.
J'ai pour briller mes souliers, bien peigner mes cheveux,
Parce qu'à soir j'ai pour bien me préparer.
Lulu est revenue dans le village...

(from "Lulu est revenue dans le village," ..., as sung by Cleoma Falcon on*Cleoma B. Falcon: A Cajun Classic,*Jadfel Records)

Leo Soileau, who performed on the second Cajun record, "Hey, Mama, Where You At?" with Mayus Lafleur, formed one of the first string bands as the accordion began to lose favor during the 30s. His Three Aces recorded early country and swing tunes, some translated, some not. His discography, filled with classic Cajun waltzes and two-steps like "The Basile Waltz" and "Petite ou grosse," also includes titles of obvious Anglo-American origin like "My Wild Irish Rose," "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," and "Love Letters in the Sand." Others like "Quand je suis bleu," (When I'm Blue), "Je ne me tracasse pas plus," (I Don't Worry Anymore), and "Dans ton coeur tu aimes un autre" (In Your Heart You Love Another) are thinly disguised translations or adaptations of popular songs. The tune to his "Personne m'aime pas," for example, is the same as "Nobody's Darling But Mine," though he makes no apparent attempt to translate the English lyrics:

Oui, mais, personne pour m'aimer.
Moi, je connais, oui, ça me fait pas rien, oui.
O, oui, mais personne m'aime pas.
Oui, ça me fait rien, mon négre, chére...

(from "Personne m'aime pas," as performed by Leo Soileau on*Leo Soileau,*Old Timey Records)

In the thick of the Americanizing 30s and 40s, stringbands with names like Aces, Ramblers, Merrymakers, and Playboys were the order of the day. They dutifully imitated bluegrass, country and western swing in earnest, producing such classics as the Hackberry Ramblers' "Une piastre ici, une piastre là-bas," the Oklahoma Tornadoes' bilingual "Dans la prison," and eventually the Riverside Ramblers' unilingual "Wondering." Harry Choates was easily the most popular Cajun stringband leader of his day. His music no longer imitated western swing. It was western swing, and good western swing at that. His first language was French, but he sang the language of swing with virtually no accent in recordings ranging from a swinging remake of the traditional "Pauvre Hobo" to songs with telling titles like "Harry Choates' Special."

After World War II, returning Cajun GIs, aching from foreign wars in faraway places, sank into the hot bath of their own culture. They drank and danced to forget the war. Dance halls throughout South Louisiana once again blared the familiar sounds of homemade music, but the traditional sound was not unaffected by the years of apprenticeship to America. Trap drum sets, steel guitars and electric pickups remained as part of the new standard instrumentation. Iry Lejeune, an unwitting leader of the revival whose 1948 recording of "La Valse du Pont d'Amour" prompted local companies to record the new wave of old music, found inspiration in diverse sources. Along with his spirited renditions of the legendary Amédé Ardoin's Creole blues recorded in the late 20s and early 30s, he recorded songs inspired by another legendary blues performer. His "Bosco Blues" clearly echoes the tune of Jimmy Rogers' "I Was a Stranger," also about a loner who walked the railroad tracks.

Si tu me vois aprés marcher au long du chemin de fer,
Si tu me vois aprés marcher au long du chemin de fer,
Parti aprés une balle de foin pour donner à mon petit veau.

(from "It Happened to Me," as performed by Iry Lejeune on The Legendary Iry Lejeune, Goldband Records)

One of the most important figures in Cajun music, Nathan Abshire often adapted popular country songs to Cajun music. The tune of his classic waltz, "La Valse de Bèlisaire," is based on Roy Acuff's "A Precious Jewel," and "Mon coeur fait plus mal" is a direct translation of "I Don't Hurt Anymore."

In the 1950s, one of the first outlaws of country music, Hank Williams, had a profound effect on Cajun music in general and on D.L. Menard in particular. Menard, who relishes his nickname, "The Cajun Hank Williams," composed a flurry of original Cajun songs in the 1960s, many of them based on Hank's tunes. The tune for his classic "La Porte d'en arriére," for example, was adapted from the "Honky Tonk Blues." Williams, whose only son was born in Shreveport while Hank was launching his career on the stage of the Louisiana Hayride, performed often in South Louisiana. It was in those bayou honky-tonks that he encountered the Cajuns and their hybrid music which in turn affected his own repertoire. His "Cajun Baby" reflects his appreciation for South Louisiana's dark-eyed beauties. One of his biggest hits, "Jambalaya," was based on a lively but unassuming Cajun two-step called "Grand Texas," or "L'Anse Couche-couche." Interestingly, Williams' song later came home to roost, translated into French and recorded by Aldus Roger and the Lafayette Playboys.

Bonsoir, Joe, moi, j'ai pour aller, moi et Mayeux,
Moi, j'ai pour aller haler la piroque dessus le bayou.
Ma Yvonne, la plus mignonne dessus le bayou.
Son of a gun, on va s'amuser dessus le bayou.

Jambalaya, les écrevisses et le filè gumbo.
A soir j'ai pour aller voir ma chére amie-o...

(from "Jambalaya," Williams/Credeur, as sung by Johnny Credeur with Aldus Roger and the Lafayette Playboys on Aldus Roger Plays the French Music of South Louisiana, La Louisianne Records)

There are other examples of the current of influence flowing in both directions. The tune of Joe South's national hit, "The Games People Play," is remarkably close to that of a Cajun children's song, "Petit galop pour Mamou." South worked for a while in the south Louisiana oil patch and may have heard it during that time. Cajun musician Nathan Abshire later recorded a translation called "Les Games que le monde joue."

La, la, la...
Oh the games people play, now,
Every night and every day, now,
Never meaning what they say, now,
Never saying what they mean.

While they while away the hours
In their ivory towers,
Till they're covered up with flowers
In the back of a black limousine.
La, la, la...

(from "The Games People Play,"..., as performed by Joe South

La, la, la...
O les games que le monde joue
Ça me fait de la peine de les voir faire,
Casser le coeur de nous
Tout le temps dans les miséres.
La, la, la...

(from "Les Games que le monde joue," as performed by Nathan Abshire and his Pinegrove Boys on Pinegrove Blues, Swallow Records)

The Cajuns seem to have become exotic examples of cultural survival in America and a surprising number of superstars have an interest in Cajun music. The first recording of country music superstar Waylon Jennings was a waltz called "Jolie Blonde." A number of groups have recorded versions of a Link Davis adaptation called "Big Mamou." Recent recordings by Johnny Cash, Loretta Lynn, Conway Twitty, and Charlie Daniels have focused on the Cajuns. Jerry Reed's ornery, swamp-dwelling, alligator-fighting "Amos Moses" is fairly representative of the Cajun's Southern Comfort-style stereotype in many of these songs.

> Amos Moses was a Cajun.
> He lived way back in the swamp.
> He fought alligators for a living.
> He'd just hit on the head with a stump.

(from "Amos Moses," as performed by Jerry Reed on "Jerry Reed," MCA Records)

Emmylou Harris even included a touch of accordion (played by Garth Hudson, formerly of The Band which prepared for their first tour in a cabin near Lake Charles) in her recording of "Leaving Louisiana in the Broad Daylight," also about Cajuns getting mad in the swamp.

> Well, it's down in the swamp where anything goes,
> It's alligator bait and the bars don't close.
> It's the real thing down in Louisiana.
>
> Did you ever seen a Cajun when he really got mad,
> Really got trouble like a daughter gone bad?

It gets real hot down in Louisiana.

Oh the stranger'd better move it or he's gonna get killed,
Gonna have to get it or the shotgun will.
It ain't no time for lengthy speeches,
No, it ain't no time for lengthy speeches.

(from "Leaving Louisiana in the Broad Daylight," Rodney Crowell, as performed by Emmylou Harris on*Quarter Moon in a Ten-Cent Sky,*MCA Records)

And on 13, Harris also included a version of the "Lacassine Special," which she and her Hot Band learned while visiting South Louisiana, with rhythm guitarist Barry Tashian playing an accordion he bought from Cajun musician and instrument maker Marc Savoy of Eunice, Louisiana.

Jimmy C. Newman and Doug Kershaw have made their marks on the national scene with a combination of styles ranging from traditional Cajun music to country and rockabilly. In the 1960s, Doug Kershaw gained something of a cult following with hits like "Louisiana Man" and "Diggy Liggy Lo." He often recycled traditional Cajun tunes to produce his blend of Cajun, country and rock. "La Valse des bambocheurs," for example, became "I'm Not Strong Enough," and his "Cajun Stripper" is a souped up version of the traditional "Bosco Stomp." After a string of straight country hits in the 1950s, Jimmy C. Newman finally broke a few Cajun influenced songs into the charts with "Alligator Man" in 1961, "Bayou Talk" in 1962 and "Louisiana Saturday Night" in 1967. In 1974, he recorded "Lache pas la patate." The bilingual version hit the American charts and the French version earned a gold record in Canada. In addition to his years with Jimmy C. Newman, fiddler Rufus Thibodeaux has added his Cajun shuffle to lots of country and western swing bands,

performing with such giants as Bob Wills, Ernest Tubbs, George Jones, Merle Haggard, and Neil Young.

East of the Atchafalaya Basin, in the Terrebonne and Lafourche country, Cajun music and country have blended effortlessly for years. The music of performers like L. J. Foret, Gene Rodrigue, and especially Vin Bruce represents a happy marriage of the two styles.

> O chére petite fille, moi qui t'aime oui autant.
> O chére petite sois tout le temps avec moi.
> Un jour à l'avenir tu vas voir ça je te dis.
> Je vas d'être aprés t'espèrer dedans la Louisiane...

(from "Dedans la Louisiane," Bruce/Martin, as sung by Vin Bruce, Cajun Country Swallow Records)

Today, there continues to be some direct translation of contemporary country hits like Camey Doucet's version of "Swinging" ("Bercer") and Belton Richard's versions of "Elvira" ("Clotilia"), "The Streak" ("La Petite Eclair"), and "Behind Closed Doors" ("En arriére des portes fermées"):

> Ma belle me fait fier. O comme elle me fait fier.
> Elle me fait jamais honte à se pendre dessus moi devant le monde.
> Parce que le monde aime parler. O comme ça aime parler.
> Mais quand ça ôte les lumières, je connais elle va partir avec moi.
>
> Mais quand on se met en arrière des portes fermées...

(from "En arrière des portes fermées," as performed by Belton Richard and the Musical Aces on Good 'n Cajun, Swallow Records)

The sound that English author John Broven has dubbed swamp pop is essentially Cajun rhythm and blues. This can be expressed in French, as in the music of Belton Richard and his Musical Aces.

Un autre soir ennuyant
Quand toi, t'es pas là.
Les larmes tombent dans mon coeur,
C'est ça qui me fait peur.
Un autre soir ennuyant.

(from "Un autre soir d'ennui," Belton Richard, as performed by Belton Richard and the Musical Aces on Modern Sounds in Cajun Music, Swallow Records)

Or bilingually, as in the music of Gib Guilbeau:

Why did you go and leave me in Louisiana, Sweet Susannah?
You left me for a fellow who wore a big black umbrella.
He came to the sticks to buy some antiques.
He was a wheeler and dealer, a woman stealer.

C'est la belle de la Louisiane
Qui va jamais faire ma femme.
Elle est jolie. Elle est mignonne,
Mais elle est pas bonne...

(from "Sweet Susannah," Gib Guilbeau, as performed by Clint West and the Boogie Kings on J'étais au bal, Swallow Records)

Some swamp pop performers, like Johnny Allan (Guillot), Warren Storm (Schexnayder), and Rod Bernard, were the sons of Cajun musicians, and this heritage sometimes showed through the rock and roll. Local record companies, like Ville Platte's own Jinn Records, were formed to release some of these crossover classics. In 1955, Bobby Page and the Riff Raffs recorded a rocking version of "Hip et Taiaut," a standard Cajun two-step, with blazing saxes and electric guitars instead of an accordion and fiddles, but the song was French and so was the feeling. Rod Bernard hit the charts in 1959 with a song called "This Should Go

On Forever" and even appeared on American Bandstand. Another of his hits was a bilingual version of "Allons danser, Colinda." In 1961, Cleveland Crochet sneaked into the charts with an accordion/rock blend called "Sugar Bee." Joe Barry recorded "Je suis bet [sic] pour t'aimer," a translation of his own hit "I'm a Fool to Care." A sort of Cajun Freddie Fender, Johnny Allan has recently recorded several bilingual songs like "One More Time/Une autre chance" and "Little Fat Man/Petit homme gros," but he had perhaps his biggest hit in 1962 with a parody of Johnny Horton's "North to Alaska" called "South to Louisiana."

Adaptations continue to enrich the repertoire of Cajun musicians. Under the creative guidance of singer/songwriter Ivy Dugas, Phil Menard and the Louisiana Travelers have recorded several obvious Cajun versions of country songs, such as "Mauvais Leroy Brown." In an effort to generate new repertoire for Cajun musicians in the French Canadian tradition of Willie Lamotte, David Marcantel adapted several popular country songs, like "Country Roads" ("Ma Louisiane") and "Help Me Make It Through the Night" ("Aide-moi à passer la nuit"), with orchestral arrangements instead of traditional instrumentation for his singer sister Nancy Tabb Marcantel.

Today young Cajun musicians would be less than honest if they pretended that they never listened to the radio. Thus, the sounds of country and rock, reggae and jazz are incorporated today as naturally as were the blues and French contredanses of old. Zachary Richard has blended country, rock and reggae into his Zack Attack sound.

Hello, Joséphine, comment ça va?
Hello, Joséphine, comment ça va?

On jouait ensemble.
On chantait, "Ou la la."

J'aime comment tu marches.
J'aime comment tu parles.
J'aime comment tu "ou la la," Joséphine.
On jouait ensemble.
On chantait, "Ou la la..."

(from "Hello, Joséphine," Domino/Richard, as performed by Zachary Richard on Vent d'été, Kébec Disc)

Wayne Toups has also blended outside sources to form his ZydeCajun sound. His "ZydeCajun" album on Kajun Records represents a remarkable fusion of traditional and modern influences and has several songs that are obviously influenced by contemporary sounds. His "Zydeco est pas salé" is the most rocking version yet recorded, and his version of Sam Cooke's "Got You On My Mind" makes great use of the talents of former Red Beans and Rice Revue lead guitarist Tommy Shreve. Wayne's translation shows that Cajun French continues to effectively transmit rhythm and blues lyrics:

T'es là sur mon idée,
Après jongler, ma chère petite fille, ayoû toi, t'es.
T'es là sur mon idée,
Aprés jongler, ma chère petite fille, ayoû toi, t'es, yeah.
Aprés jongler ayoû toi, t'es
Et jongler, ma chère petite fille, ayoû tu vas aller.

Les larmes commencent à tomber
Chaque fois, ma chère petite fille, je jongle à toi.
Les larmes commencent à tomber
Chaque fois, ma chère petite fille, je jongle à toi, yeah.
Depuis quand t'as quitté,
L'amour alentour icitte, c'est pas la même...

(from "T'es là sur mon idée," Cooke/Toups, as performed by Wayne Toups and the ZydeCajun Band on Wayne Toups ZydeCajun, Kajun Records)

Cajun music has undeniably been affected by American music. It has in turn had a certain effect on the national music scene. The permanent exhibit of the Country Music Hall of Fame includes a section devoted to Cajun music. Yet the changes which have occurred in the tradition are not necessarily a sign of decay, as it was first thought. On the contrary, they may be a sign of vitality. The early effects of Americanization were rightly considered drastic because it was too much too fast and the melting pot boiled over. After World War II, however, the cooks of South Louisana culture regained control of their own kitchen and continue to simmer a gumbo of rich and diverse ingredients, including a heaping tablespoon of Anglo-American influence.

RECONSIDERING THE HISTORY OF CAJUN AND CREOLE MUSIC: THE LOMAX RECORDINGS, 1934-1937

Barry Jean Ancelet

During the 1930s, John and Alan Lomax travelled across this country recording traditional music for the Library of Congress. Their work paralleled other Depression years projects like the Farm Securities Administration's photographers project and the Work Projects Administration's Federal Writer's Project which had as a goal to document America. These projects represented an important change in the way America perceived itself as Teddy Roosevelt's melting pot nationalism gave way to more pluralistic attitudes focusing on the richness of ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity. The Lomax recordings became the basis for the Library's Archive of Folk Song, a veritable treasure of America's traditional music.

Commercial recording companies like Decca, Columbia, RCA Victor and Bluebird had been recording regional and ethnic music from throughout America since the early part of this century to sell record players. There was not yet a national music scene. In order to arouse interest in their machines, they had to provide the kind of music that people were interested in hearing: their own. To sell record players in South Louisiana, these companies inadvertently recorded the tail end of a formative period in the development of Cajun music, as well as its subsequent changes. Since commercial records were made to be sold, they provided a good barometer of popular trends. They also gave a sort of imprimatur to the musicians they recorded. In South Louisiana,

traditional culture was the popular culture at the turn of the century, but soon enough the recorded musicians began to set the "official" style. Joseph and Cléoma Falcon were fairly well-known in the area around their native Rayne, but the release of "Lafayette" in 1928 made them larger than life. Later that same year, Cléoma Falcon's brothers Ophé, Cléopha and Amédé Breaux made the first recording of "Jolie Blonde," which they called "Ma blonde est partie." The instrumentation and style of the recording were just as classic as the waltz was to become, including the accordion, fiddle and guitar, and a high-pitched singing style necessary to pierce through the noise of early dance halls.

It was in this period, just after the turn of the century that the stock repertoire of Cajun and Creole music was formed based on a blend of influences from French, Acadian, Spanish, German, Amerindian, Scotch-Irish, Anglo-American and black traditions. The blend of sounds in Cajun music reflected the gumbo of cultures in South Louisiana. Dennis McGee's "Valse du vacher," for example, recorded in 1929, is a bluesy description of the life of a cowboy sung in French to the tune of an old world mazurka. Others like Amédé Ardoin, Leo Soileau, Mayus Lafleur, Moise Robin, the Walker Brothers, the Segura Brothers, and Angelas Lejeune joined in the first wave of Cajun and Creole musicians to record.

By the mid-1930s, the Americanization of South Louisiana was well under way. Accordions began to fade from the scene as string bands like the Hackberry Ramblers and Leo Soileau's Four Aces drifted toward Anglo-American styles, incorporating western swing, country and popular

radio tunes into their repertoires. Rural electrification made sound amplification available to country dance halls producing changes in instrumental and singing styles. Yet, though traditional Cajun and Creole music was pushed underground by new, more popular sounds, the Lomax recordings show that it did not disappear.

Home music, including unaccompanied singing and individual instrumentals, was virtually untapped by commercial recordings which focused on the public mode of Cajun music. The Lomaxes made a deliberate attempt to cover the ground that commercial companies ignored. Unlike the commercial companies which brought musicians out of their cultural contexts to record in urban centers like New Orleans, Chicago and New York, the Lomaxes went to the musicians' and singers' home turf with the Library of Congress recording machine with which they made aluminum disks in the field. It is evident from the list of towns they recorded in that the Lomaxes were travelling down the Old Spanish Trail, highway 90. The majority of recordings are from New Iberia, Lafayette, Crowley and Jennings, although there are some from side trips to places like Erath, Kaplan, Delcambre, St. Martinville and Bosco. They recorded ballads, blues laments, drinking songs, round dance songs, along with a few fiddle tunes and house dance bands. Because they focused on the oldest expressions, the sounds they documented went much further back than the commercial records which tended to capture contemporary styles. Some of these songs have long been available in transcription in Irene Whitfield's landmark study, Louisiana French Folk Songs, but the rediscovery of these discs in the Library of Congress's Archive of Traditional Music adds the element of

sound to help understand some of the early roots of Louisiana French music.

While looking for singers in New Iberia, Alan Lomax met the Hoffpauir girls. He was struck by the variety of their songs and the clarity of their voices. "J'ai vu Lucille," a fairly liberated little ditty by the Hoffpauir girls, describes a woman with one eye closed, perhaps kissing her man, and the other eye open looking for another. The notion that sleeping in the arms of her man will give a girl good dreams seems innocent enough today, but was quite racy for the times.

J'AI VU LUCILLE (31b3) Elita, Mary and Ella Hoffpauir, New Iberia

J'ai vu Lucille avec un oeil fermé
Et l'autre était ouvert après regarder pour un autre.

O toi, chérie, si tu veux faire un joli rêve,
Essaie de sommeiller dedans les bras de ton nègre.

J'ai pris le char et j'ai ride les blues
Jusque ça ou bien le plus loin le char m'amène.

The Hoffpauir sisters sang several songs together, but Lomax seemed particularly interested in sixteen-year-old Elita whose remarkable voice and songs reflected both the richness of her French European heritage and the influence of her black Creole neighbors. "Tout un beau soir en me promenant," a fragmented version of "La Rencontre au bois charmant" (Laforte J-13) of the bergère cycle popular in French and French-American tradition describes the meeting of the lumberjacks and the shepherdess who tells them that if they will spare the trees, she will keep their glasses filled with wine.

TOUT UN BEAU SOIR EN ME PROMENANT (37a1) Elita Hoffpauir, New Iberia

Tout un beau soir en me promenant
O tout du long du petit bois charmant,

'Garde, je vois là-bas, je vois venir une bergère.
Ca me fait rappeler la seule que mon coeur aime.

"Belle bergère, jolie bergère,
C'est quoi vous faîtes dedans ces bois?"

"J'ai mes moutons dedans ces plaines
Là où le loup me fait souvent ouvrage."

Les beaux bûcheurs, ils sont partis au bois,
C'est pour couper la fleur du bois.

"Ne couper pas ni la souche ni la retraite,
Vous goûterez du vin dans mes bouteilles."

"En buvons une, en buvons deux,
En buvons trois, o s'il le faut."

"Le Clefs de la prison," on the other hand, is clearly influenced by black Creole tradition. The words, sung to a bluesy tune, echo the "prisoner's farewell" motif found in commercially recorded Creole songs like Amédé Ardoin's "Blues de la prison" and Canray Fontenot's "Barres de la prison."

LES CLEFS DE LA PRISON (31a2) Elita Hoffpauir, New Iberia

Chère Mam, o viens me donner les clefs,
Les clefs de la prison, les clefs de la prison.
"Baptiste, comment tu veux je te donne
Les clefs de la prison quand les officiers
Les ont accrochées dans le cou, les ont accrochées dans le cou?"

Chère Mam, ils vont venir me chercher,
Mais à neuf heures à soir,
Mais oui, c'est pour me pendre,
Mais à dix heures en nuit, mais à dix heures en nuit.

Chère Mam, c'est ça qui me fait plus de peine,
C'est de savoir ma mort,
Aussi longtemps d'avance, aussi longtemps d'avance.

Grandpère, mais qui s'a mis à genoux
En s'arrachant les cheveux, en s'arrachant les cheveux.
"Baptiste, comment t'as pu quitté,
Mais c'est pour t'en aller
Dans une si grande prison?"

Cher Pap, comment tu voulais je fais
Quand les officiers étaient tout le tour de moi
Avec les carabines, avec les carabines?

Chère Mam, c'est ça qui me fait plus de peine,
C'est de savoir ma mort
Aussi longtemps d'avance, aussi longtemps d'avance.

O Mam, ils vont venir me chercher,
Mais à neuf heures à soir,
Mais oui, c'est pour me pendre,
Mais à dix heures en nuit, mais à dix heures en nuit.

Chère Mam, oui, je veux c'est toi qui m'emmènes,
Mais oui, mon corps en terre
Avec mon beau cheval cannel
Et ma belle voiture noire
Avec les quatres roues rouges, avec les quatres roues rouges.

Chère Mam, oui, je veux c'est toi qui m'emmènes,
Mais oui, mon corps en terre
Avec mon beau cheval cannel
Et ma belle voiture noire
Avec les quatres roues rouges, avec les quatres roues rouges.

After recording the Hoffpauir girls for the better part of an afternoon, Lomax rightly felt he had found a cultural treasure. Then, one of the girls told him that they were happy to sing for him, but that he should wait for the real singer in the family to get home. When their father arrived, Lomax understood what the girls meant. Julian Hoffpauir was a powerful singer with a vast repertoire of songs from France and Acadia which ranged from lullabies to drinking songs and included some of the most beautiful complaintes ever recorded, like his version of "La Belle et les trois capitaines," also known as "La Belle qui fait la morte," which Child associates with "The Gay Goshawk" (no. 96). In order to avoid the advances of the young captain, the maiden

feigns death for three days to return with her honor intact to her father and true love in the end. Unlike Shakespeare's Juliet, this maiden's plan succeeds.

LA BELLE ET LE CAPITAINE (32a1) Julian Hoffpauir, New Iberia

Le plus jeune des trois,
L'a pris par sa main blanche.

"Montez, montez, la belle,
Dessus mon cheval gris.
Au logis chez mon père,
Je vous emmènerai."

Quand la belle-z-entend,
Elle s'est mis-t-à pleurer.

"Soupez, soupez, la belle,
Prenez, oui-z-appétit.
Auprès du capitaine
Vous passerez la nuit."

Quand la belle-z-entend,
La belle est tombée morte.

"Sonnez, sonnez les cloches,
Tambours, violons, marchez.
Ma mignonnette est morte.
J'en ai le coeur dolent.

"Et où l'enterreront-ils?"
"Dedans le jardin de son père
Sous les trois feuilles de lys.
Nous prions Dieux, cher frère,
Qu'elle aille en paradis."

Au bout de trois jours,
La belle frappe à la porte.

"Ouvrez, ouvrez la porte,
Cher père et bien aimé.
J'ai fait la morte trois jours
Pour sauver mon honneur."

The Lomaxes captured the tail end of an active unaccompanied singing tradition in South Louisiana. The collection includes other beautiful solo performances like that of Fenelus Sonnier, of Erath.

LA CHANSON DE THEOGENE DUBOIS (26b2) Fenelus Sonnier, Erath

Je me marie dans quatre semaines.
O avec qui, avec Théogène Dubois.

Prends-le, ma fille, c'est un vaillant garçon.
Il ne joue pas aux cartes que bien souvent.

Que bien souvent, qu'il joue que son habit.
Que bien souvent, qu'il joue que son habit.

Adieu, Théogène, ayoû tu te sauves?
Songez, petit, j'ai perdu mon chapeau.

Adieu, Théogène, ayoû tu te sauves?
Songez mon homme, j'ai perdu mon habit.

Adieu, Théogène, ayoû tu sauves?
Songez, mon homme, j'ai perdu mon habit.

Le voilà Théogène qui s'en vient là-bas,
Nu pied, nue tête, il a plus d'habit.

Le voilà Théogène qui s'en vient là-bas,
Nu pied, nue tête, il a plus d'habit.

However, some of the most interesting recordings are of group singing. Fenelus Sonnier, for example, usually sang with one or more of his brothers Isaac, Cleveland and Romélus, and their first cousin, Fenelon Brasseaux, all of Erath, for weddings, boucheries and other community gatherings. Their repertoire included blues ballads like "La Chanson des Savoy:"

LA CHANSON DES SAVOY (26b1) Fenelon Brasseaux, Isaac and Cleveland Sonnier, Erath

Le soleil est proche couché et mon cheval, il est proche larque
Et j'ai faim et j'ai soif et je suis loin de ma famille.

Bye-bye, jolie brune, et bye-bye, jolie blonde.
Mais ça, c'est tout pour la brune et pas rien pour la blonde.

Je suis parti au Baton Rouge/grand bois avec la joque au plombeau.
Les férailles à la poche et le jeu de cartes dans la main,
Et je cherche qu'à malfaire.

Bye-bye, jolie brune, et bye-bye, jolie blonde.
Mais ça, c'est tout pour la brune et pas rien pour la blonde.

Je suis parti au Baton Rouge pour recevoir la berouette.
En recevant de la berouette, mais c'est le fouet dessus mon dos,
Mais je préfère que la mort.

Bye-bye, jolie brune, et bye-bye, jolie blonde.
Mais ça, c'est tout pour la brune et pas rien pour la blonde.

It also included songs to accompany drinking, such as "Trinquons:"

TRINQUONS (26a3) Fenelon Brasseaux, Isaac and Cleveland Sonnier, Erath

Trinquons, trinquons, mes chers camarades,
Mais oublions jamais la raison.

Soutenez mon verre et me voilà par terre.
Chantez de boire du matin au soir.

Que le tonnerre grogne et que la muraille recule.
Me voilà par terre du matin au soir.

In the Kaplan area, Alan Lomax found another family of singers, the Vincents. He was discussing his project in a bar one Sunday afternoon when someone next to him said that he knew people who sang and took him to meet Lanese Vincent and his cousin Sidney Richard who were in town for the day. They went into one of the loading chutes at the Louisiana State Rice Mill to isolate themselves from the street noise and there recorded some of the most remarkable songs of the entire collection, such as "J'ai marié un ouvrier," a Louisiana French version of Child 243, "James Harris" or "The Demon Lover," often called "The Carpenter's

Wife." In Louisiana French, ouvrier is not a general laborer, as in continental French, but specifically a carpenter. In this version, a well-bred young wife, bored with her carpenter husband, is swept away by a sailor. When he brings her to the port city, she learns that he is to sail away. She then realizes that she will be alone and unable to return to the family she has abandoned. The yellow silk dress he offers her in consolation is mentioned in Scottish versions of the ballad (in David Buchan's Ballads of the North of Scotland). Although it is tempting to explore the connection between northwestern France and Celtic England, it is more likely that this Louisiana French variant developed from American sources. Child refers to an Americanized version published in Philadelphia (1858) which also sets the story "on the banks of the old Tennessee."

J'AI MARIE UN OUVRIER (27b1) Lanese Vincent and Sidney Richard, Kaplan

"J'ai marié un ouvrier, moi qui étais si vaillante fille,
Mais c'était de m'en dispenser sans attraper des reproches."

"Mais quitte ton ouvrier, et viens-t-en donc, c'est avec moi.
O viens-t-en donc, c'est avec moi dessus l'écore du Tennessee."

"Dessus l'écore du Tennessee, quoi-ce t'aurais pour m'entretenir?
Quoi-ce t'aurais pour m'entretenir dessus l'écore du Tennessee?"

"J'en ai de ces gros navires qui naviguent dessus l'eau
Et soi-disant pour t'opposer de travailler."

Au bout de trois jours, trois jours et trois semaines,
O la belle se mit à pleurer l'ennui de sa famille.

"Ne pleure donc pas, la belle, je t'acheterai une robe de soie jaune
Qu'elle soit mais la couleur de l'or et de l'argent."

"Je ne pleure non pas ton or, ni ton or ni ton argent,
Mais je pleure ma famille que j'ai laissée là-bas."

"Je t'ai pas toujours dit, la belle, et quand ce batiment cêlerait,
O il aurait une carlet à plus jamais resourdre.

"Dessus l'écore du Tennessee, t'embrasserais ton cher et petit bébé.
O tu l'embrasserais à plus jamais le revoir."

Vincent and Richard's "Madame Gallien" seems innocent enough at first glance. A mother's wishes are granted when her daughter's suitor asks for her hand in marriage. However, in Celtic tradition, troubled people often made inadvertent pacts with faeries while walking down a country lane wishing aloud. Madame Gallien's concern about her daughter in the beginning could be due to a variety of reasons, some innocent enough. Daughters were formerly expected to marry in order of age. The unmarried Josette may simply have been holding up the marrying of her younger sisters. there is also the possibility that Josette's honor was in question. Whatever the case, Madame Gallien seems to have dealt with spirits to obtain the marriage. The curious little fiddler that the wedding party meets on its way to church may be a portent of things to come. Faerie music is considered an evil omen in Ireland and the devil is often described as a fiddler in popular tradition. The wearing out of shoes (searching, dancing, etc.) is also frequently associated with demons.

MADAME GALLIEN (28b1) Lanese Vincent and Sidney Richard, Kaplan

Madame Gallien était promenant
Dans son jardin, son coeur bien chagrin.

Tout le long d'une allée,
Elle faisait que pleurer,

Toujours en espérant
Pierrot Grouillet pour se marier.

Pierrot Grouillet, il est arrivé.
Il dit, "Josette, faut se marier."

Tout chacun s'en va chez soi
Pour laisser savoir à tout,
Danse, sur le moment,
Monsieur le curé publiera les bans.

O son parrain, il la consentant,
Il dit, "Moi, j'irai les mener."

Deux vieux boeufs, deux vieux chevaux
Attelés sur un vieux chariot
Pour aller marier
Pierrot Grouillet et Mademoiselle Josette.

Dans le chemin, ils ont fait rencontre
D'un petit bonhomme,
Un pied chaussé et l'autre nu.

Son violon dans son bras,
Son archet dans sa main,
Il disait qu'il voulait jouer
Jusqu'à qu'il n'ait plus de souliers.

In addition to unaccompanied tradition, the Lomaxes also recorded some instrumental music. One of their most important finds was a flawless fiddler from Indian Bayou named Wayne Perry. Perry's repertoire reflects a confluence of French Cajun and Anglo-American traditions. He recorded nameless waltzes,

CAJUN WALTZ (21b2) Wayne Perry, Indian Bayou

two-steps,

CAJUN TWO-STEP (21b3) Wayne Perry, Indian Bayou

along with Virginia reels, like "Old Joe Clark," and popular tunes, like "Sitting on Top of the World," clearly influenced by Cajun tradition and the blues.

Although the Lomaxes generally avoided the musicians who were being recorded commercially, they did make one exception recording a dance at the White Oak club in New Iberia played by the Segura Brothers of Delcambre. Fiddler Edier Segura was a poverful and soulful singer as demonstrated in his recording of a gallows blues lament, "Viens donc t'assir sur la croix de ma tombe:"

VIENS DONC T'ASSIR SUR LA CROIX DE MA TOMBE (40a2) Segura Brothers, Delcambre

Mon père me fait dire moi, je pourrais plus confesser du tout.

J'ai les blues. 'Garde donc là. Moi, je seras après être mis dans le cercueil.

Vendredi passé, quand donc ils m'ont appelé, moi, j'ai vu le chapelet dans mes yeux.

Ils m'ont dit moi, faut je vas donc monter dessus la potence de toujours.

Quand j'ai monté dessus la potence, moi, j'ai vu la seule petite brune, c'était devant mes yeux.

Va donc rouvert donc mes fosses et la porte du cimetière

Pour m'en aller dans les flammes de l'enfer br~ler.

Mmm, je gone être planté sur la montagne pour toi,

Et trois jours après ma mort, viens donc t'assir sur la croix de ma tombe, o la misère.

In the Jennings area, Lomax found two migrant black Creole farm hands named Paul Junius Malveaux and Ernest Lafitte who recorded songs accompanied by the harmonica. Although relatively unrecorded commercially, this instrument was popular in Cajun and Creole non-public music. Based on the same diatonic scale as its larger cousin, the accordion, the harmonica could be used to play most of the popular dance tunes. Since it fit conveniently in a shirt pocket, it was handy for filling lunch breaks and other such casual moments with music. "Bye-bye, bonsoir, mes parents," is a version of Amédé Ardoin's "Orphan's Waltz."

BYE-BYE, BONSOIR, MES PARENTS (85a2) Paul Junius Malveaux and Ernest Lafitte, Jennings

Dis bye-bye, bonsoir, mes parents.
Je suis orphelin il y a beaucoup des années.
Je suis obligé de prendre ma misère comme ça vient, cher petit monde.
Tes parents, il y en a plus un qui veut me revoir.

Quand on me voit, ça m'appelle trainailleur.
Chaque fois quand je te vois, cher petit monde,
On dirait qu'il faudrait que moi, m'en vas
Et passer devant la porte de ta maison, catin.

Dans cinq ans, je vas te revoir une autre fois, cher petit monde,
Mais avant que toi tu te maries.
Là après, tu pourras t'en aller puis te marier,
Mais quand toi, tu pourras.

It is difficult to tell in many cases whether commercially recorded music entered unaccompanied tradition or was drawn from it. The beginning of Joseph Jones' "Blues de la prison" echos almost word for word Douglas Bellard's recording of "La Valse de la prison," both recorded about the same time.

BLUES DE LA PRISON (80a1) Joseph Jones, Jennings

Tu vas souffert, petite fille,
Pour ça t'après me faire,
T'auras jamais de bonheur dans ta vie.
Oui, jour aujourd'hui,
Ma chère vieille maman
Dans la porte de la prison,
Les deux mains sur la tête, chère,
Pleurant pour moi.
O! J'ai dit, "Ma maman,
Pleure pas pour moi.
Demande à tes amis pour t'aider
Faire des prières pour sauver mon ame
De les flammes de l'enfer.
O! Voir aujourd'hui, voir aujourd'hui,
J'ai fini de te voir,
Fini de te voir sur la terre du Bon Dieu.
Good-bye, petite fille, good-bye, petite fille,
Pour tout mes jours et tout tes tiens."
J'ai dit, "Fais dire aujourd'hui
Que j'après m'en aller.
Je pars, tu connais."
Dit, "Mon cher monde, 'garde-le voir."
O...

J'ai dit, "Viens donc me rejoindre
Là-bas à la maison."
Dit, "C'est moi tout tout tout seul."
Dit, "C'est voir aujourd'hui toi, petite fille.
O toi, tête noire.
O toi, joues roses."
J'ai dit, "O toi, mignonne,
Je voudrais que tu viens
Donner ta chère petite main droite
Pour nous autres s'en aller,
S'en aller à la maison des Moreau."
O...
J'ai dit, "O chère mignonne."

Dit, "Toi, toi, tête noire,
Voir aujourd'hui
Comment loin," dit, "t'es de moi.
Je voudrais," dit, "tu viens
Donc me rejoindre à la maison,"
Dit, "toujours.
O toi, mignonne,
O toi, joues roses."
J'ai dit, "O toi, tête noire.
O toi, tête noire."
Dit, "Voir aujourd'hui
Après," dit, "marcher," dit, "les chemins.
Demande à tout qu'est," dit, "parti pour voir aujourd'hui.
O mignonne,
O mignonne.

Voir aujourd'hui, chère,
Voir comment t'es,"
Dit, "t'es après t'en aller.
Tu m'as tourné ton, ton cher dos
Pour un grand, un grand," dit, "bonrien.
O je voudrais," dit, "tu viens
Tomber dans mes bras,
Demander au Bon Dieu
Pour tu donnes, donnes,
Donnes pour tes chers," dit, "amours."

O chère petite fille,
Quoi faire tu fais
Toutes tes promesses?
Voir aujourd'hui,
T'as pas de souvenir
De ça tu m'as dit.
O voir ton père et ta mère
Qu'a tant baiser nous autres,
Baiser nous autres.
O yé yaie! O yé yaie!
C'est nous autres, chère mignonne,
O chère mignonne.
Je suis après m'en aller,
M'en aller tout les jours.
Non, ni père et mère
Pour soutenir mes pr'nes,
Soutenir me-s pr'nes,
Soutenir mes pr'nes.
O mignonne, je suis après, petit monde
Moi, m'en aller,
O m'en aller,
Aller à la maison
Pour toujours et jamais,
Ni père et mère,
Ni frère et soeur,
Ni frère et soeur,
Pour soutenir mes promesses.
O voir aujourd'hui,
C'est tourner donc mon dos,"
Dit, "à ma chère," dit, "maman,"
Dit, "à mon cher," dit, "papa."

In "Là-bas chez Moreau," another blues lament, two singers alternate verses of irregular lengths, often using the last line of one verse as the first line of the next. The language of the first is Cajun French as spoken on the prairies, while that of the second is Creole, usually associated with the eastern bayou regions. The Moreau theme,

found in contemporary commercial recordings of Creole music, is developed here to some extent. Moreau's is described as a place where one could get coffee and candy, but it is doubtful that Moreau actually sold sweets in his place. In the blues, candy is often used as a euphemism for drugs or sex. It is interesting to note that in Haitian creole, the term kandia refer to a love potion or charm, and in Malabars Creole, kandi refers to a rice pudding used in folk medecine. The story line which laments love lost, apparently after a promise of marriage, is further complicated by the mention of some rather compromising situations associated with Moreau's place. The young man in question visits the girl there to pick up his clothes. Later, one of the singers talk of drinking coffee there before getting up from the bed. Café is also used in the black community to describe a certain skin color found among those born of interracial relationships. The concern for someone out past dark is based, at least in part, on the sundown curfew formerly imposed on blacks. Until the 1960s in many places, blacks were expected to be home by sundown:

LA-BAS CHEZ MOREAU (81a1) Cleveland Benoit and Darby Hicks, Jennings

Some of the most exciting material in the Lomax collection is juré singing, a black/French/Baptist influenced round dance tradition important to the development of what is now called zarico. Toward the end of "Dégo," a song about Italians laying sick in ditches apparently from having eaten the rotten bananas laying next to them, recorded in June, 1934, Wilfred Charles of New Iberia interspersed a few lines about unsalted beans, the first known recording of the expression, "Les

haricots sont pas salés," which is said to have given the Afro-Caribbean influenced French music of Louisiana its name. The last verse may contain a clue to the socio-cultural meaning and importance of unsalted beans. In it, the singer explains that the beans are not salty because there is no salt meat in the pot, a reference to hard times. Thus, the expression and its derivative term function in Louisiana French just like the term "blues" in American English.

DEGO (11a1) Wilfred Charles

...tous malades, tous couchés dans les grands fossés.
Bananes sont tous pourries, couchées c'té de les vieux dagos.
Eh, mon Dégo! Quoi il 'n a?
Dégos sont tous malades, tous couchés dans les grands fossés.

Et là-bas dans les magasins, ils ont 'pluché des bananes.
Les bananes sont tous pourries, tous couchées dans les grands fossés.
Dégo, quoi il 'n a? O Dégo, quoi il 'n a?
Dégos sont tous malades, couchés dans les grands fossés.

Galopé dans les magasins, juste pour acheter des vieux bananes.
Les bananes sont tous pourries, tous couchées c'té de les Dégos.
Dégo, quoi il 'n a?
Dégos sont tous malades, tous couchés dans les grands fossés.
Bananes sont tout pourries, couchées c'té de les vieux Dégos.

Ah! Mon vieux Dégo, quoi il 'n a? Quoi il 'n a?
Quoi il 'n a? Quoi il 'n a avec les Dégos?
Les Dégos sont tous malades, tous couchés dans les grands fossés.
Bananes sont tous pourries, couchées c'té de les vieux Dégos.

Dégo! O Dégo! Dégo, quoi il 'n a?
Dégos sont tous malades, tous couchés dans les grands fossés,
Couchés c'té de les vieux Dégos.

Quoi il 'n a? Quoi il 'n a avec ma femme?
Ma femme, elle est malade, couchée c'té de les vieux Dégos.
Dégo... Les haricots sont pas salés.
Quoi il 'n a, mon cher ami?
Quoi il 'n a... Les haricots sont pas salés.

O yaie! O mon nègre! Les haricots sont pas salés.

Pas mis de la viande, pas mis à rien,
Juste des haricots dans la chaudière.
Les haricots sont pas salés.
O! O nègre! Les haricots sont pas salés.

Though Wilfred Charles' solo performance bears the marks of juré singing, in full swing the tradition is based on group singing. "J'ai fait tou le tour du pays" is perhaps the best example of the cultural blending which produced juré singing. The lyrical line is based on "J'ai fait tout le tour du grand bois," an old French Acadian folk song, but the style, with its improvised percussion and remarkable vocal counterpoint, is clearly Afro-Caribbean. The bridge represents a recurring conversation between the singer who asks for beans to eat and his mother who tells him that the beans are not salty. He eventually asks how she expects him to eat unsalted beans. The bridge also includes a fragmented square or round dance call ("....'trape donc leurs belles"), suggesting round dance origins.

J'AI FAIT TOUT LE TOUR DU PAYS (79a1) Jimmy Peters and ring dance singers, Jennings

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
O yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salé.
O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

J'ai fait tout le tour du pays
Avec ma joque sur le plombeau.
Et j'ai demandé à ton père pour dix-huit piastres, chérie.
Il m'a donné que cinq piastres.

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais o chéri, les haricots sont pas salés.
O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

Toi, comment tu veux je te vas voir
Mais quand mon chapeau rouge est fini.
Toi, comment tu veux je te vas voir
Mais quand mon suit est tout déchiré.

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais, o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

J'ai fait tout le tour du pays
Avec ma joque sur le plombeau.
J'ai demandé à ton père pour dix piastres.
Il m'a donné que cinq.

Mais, o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.
O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais, o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

Comment donc tu veux, mais, manger?
Mais, o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.
O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais, o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

Comment tu veux je te vas voir
Quand mon chapeau rouge est fini?
Comment tu veux je te vas voir
Quand mon suit est tout déchiré?

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais, o chéri, les haricots sont pas salés.
Mais o mam, mais 'trape donc leurs belles.
Mais o mam, mais 'trape donc leurs belles.

Comment tu veux je te vas voir
Mais quand mon suit est tout déchiré?
Comment tu veux je te vas voir
Mais quand mon chapeau rouge est fini?

O mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
O Nénaine, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais o mam, les haricots sont pas salés.
Mais o mam, mais 'trape donc leurs belles.
O mam, les haricots sont pas salés.
Mais o yé yaie, mais comment donc je vas faire?

J'ai fait tout le tour du pays
Avec ma joque sur le plombeau.
J'ai demandé à mon père pour dix piastres.
Il m'a donné que cinq.

O yé yaie, mais comment donc je vas faire?
Mais o maman, les haricots sont pas salés.

Mais o yé yaie, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
O mam, les haricots sont pas salés.

The baptist roots of juré singing are especially clear in Creole renditions of jubilee standards like the funeral shout "Rockaway," and "God's Army," a fire-and-brimstone plea for repentance sung in an Afro-Caribbean call-and-response format. The frenzied bilingual lead vocals and hypnotically repetitive chorus line, driven by foot-stomping which sounds for the world like African drums, go beyond jubilee and gospel tradition to approach the sound and style of ritual voodoo possession chants.

FEEL LIKE DYING IN HIS ARMY (111a1) Austin Coleman, Washington and Sampson Brown, Jennings

Refrain after each line: Feel like dying in His army.

O Lord, Lord, Lord, my God.

O oui, mon cher ami, o quoi tu vas faire?

O quoi tu vas faire, comment, hein, petit monde?

O oui, ma petite, si to pries pas.

O si to pries pas, tu vas brûler dans l'enfer.

O Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, my Lord.

O oui ma petite, si toi pries pas.

O mo voyé après, o, mon docteur.

O mon docteur, li vini là.

O li dit, "Mon petit, to va pas vi."

O Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, what you gon do?

O sinner woman, you better pray.

O sinner woman, you better pray.

O oui mon petit, si to pries pas.

O si to pries pas, tu vas br~ler dans l'enfer.

O Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, what you gon do?

O Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, what you gon do?

O what you gon do when I'm dead and gone?

O what you gon do when I'm dead and gone?

O quoi tu vas faire quand je suis dead et mouru?

O cher ami, cher ami.

O lalalilalilalalalalala.

O Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord.

O sinner woman, you better pray.

O Lord, Lord, quoi tu dis?

O quoi tu vas faire quand je vas être mouru?

The cultural renaissance which began after World War II, led by musicians like Iry Lejeune and politicians like Dudley LeBlanc, rejoined traditional and popular cultures in a tacit compromise which endures today. A growing number of young musicians have actively sought to revive old sounds by visiting the oldest musicians and listening to early 78s. On several of the Lomax discs, the collectors included

announcements to effect that the recordings they were making were going to be placed in the Library of Congress where they would always be available for musicians and others to learn about America's heritage of folk music. USL's Folklore & Folklife Program recently acquired a copy of the Lomax collection with funds generated by the annual Cajun Music Festival and plans a double album of selected recordings from the collection. All this is designed to bring this remarkable resource back home so that it will be available to those interested in learning and understanding Cajun and Creole music.

ZARICO: BEANS, BLUES AND BEYOND

Barry Jean Ancelet

Like the blues and jazz, rock and reggae, zarico is the result of a typically American experience which blended European (primarily French, but also Spanish, German and English), native American and Afro-Caribbean musical traditions(1). The American colonial context was basic to the development of these hybrid music forms. Nothing quite like them developed in Europe where direct contact with African culture is rare and exotic. In Africa, the closest parallel is the high-life tradition, born of the influence of the colonial French on native African culture. In America, both European and African cultures were far from home, on new ground. Settlers and slaves learned some old ways from each other and made up lots of new ways for themselves as they carved out a new world on the frontier.

Zarico, zydeco, zodico, zologo, and even zukey jump represent a few of the spellings used by folklorists, ethnomusicologists, record producers and filmmakers in their attempts to transcribe the word performers use to describe Louisiana's black French Creole music. The word creole, which originally meant simply "native or homegrown, not imported," served, among other things, to distinguish "esclaves africains" from the more valuable "esclaves créoles." In South Louisiana, the Frenchlanguage is an important cultural identity marker. French-speaking blacks called themselves "Créoles noirs" to distinguish themselves from French-speaking whites, who might be either "Créoles français" or "Cadiens," and from English-speaking blacks who were

called "nègres américains." Black Creoles speak either "français" or "créole."

Because its language is often French or Creole, zarico tradition has largely remained a mystery to outsiders. Native Louisiana Creoles explain that the word comes from les haricots because of the expression, "Les haricots sont pas salés" ("The beans aren't salty"), heard in traditional songs. The form zydeco was the first one to appear in print. It was first used by ethnomusicologist MacCormack in the early 1960s and is the most widespread--Chris Strachwitz's California-based Arhoolie Records and most other record companies favor it. This spelling comes from an Anglo-American attempt to render the flapped "r" in "les haricots." The "z" sound would then come from the liaison with the "s" of "les" as in "les hommes." Although contemporary French frowns on the liaison because of haricot's aspirate "h," Cajun French preserves the former pronunciation of "haricots" without the aspirate "h."

So then, what's in a name? Sometimes that depends on how you spell it. Québecois filmmaker André Gladu drew criticism from Strachwitz for entitling his recent film on Louisiana black Creole music, "Zarico." Strachwitz maintained that the standard spelling of the term is zydeco, and that derivations unnecessarily cloud the issue and the dilute the potential for interest. Gladu claimed this was a colonialistic foul and countered with the explanation that zydeco is based on superimposed English phonetics, while "zarico" respects the tradition's own French language connection. Ironically this connection is the result of an earlier colonial influence. Thus, the politics, not to mention the

economics, of culture spilled over into the realm of linguistics. The debate over whether to spell the term according to precedent or to perceived cultural appropriateness continues. The question is complicated further by the recent discovery of apparent African influences which may need to be taken into account.

Folk spellings and folk etymologies often develop to explain or rationalize words and expressions whose origins or exact meaning have become unclear. The attempts of folks to make sense of a term which has strayed, for one reason or another, from its original usage often yield related, though indirectly connected meanings, much like "taking something for granted" has become for many "taking something for granite." In South Louisiana, the name given to the nocturnal witch-rider, Couche-mal, literally "to sleep poorly," is a similar adaptation of cauchemar, French for "nightmare."

In the same way, words sometimes survived the efforts of ante bellum planters to eliminate African languages among their slaves. In Louisiana French Creole animal tales, for example, the dupe of Lapin (the rabbit) is named Bouki. The word bouki is Ouolof for "hyena," traditionally the hare's dupe in West African animal tales. I have never found anyone in South Louisiana who knew the original meaning of bouki, yet the term has survived and been extended to cover generally any foolish person. Another African survival, gumbo, is still used in its original sense to refer to okra, but also has come to mean the soupy dish it is used to make. Similarly, congo came to mean "dark" or "black" in Louisiana French by association with the slaves who came from that area of Africa. The popular Cajun song "Allons danser,

Colinda," in which the singer exhorts a young lady named Colinda to dance with him while her mother is not around, is a borrowing from Creole tradition. The calinda was an African dance slaves performed despite the interdictions of their masters.

The explanation that zarico comes from the expression "Les haricots sont pas salés" was generally "taken for granite" by musicians, record producers and scholars, myself included. Recently, however, while listening to examples of Creole music collected by French ethnomusicologist Jean-Pierre LaSelve on Rodrigue, a remote island in the Indian Ocean, I was intrigued to hear the following song, "Cari zarico," a group song accompanied by clapping hands, stamping feet, drums and a triangle.

> Idée moi, idée toi, Azéline.
> Cari zarico.
> Quand la lune fé séga mouliné.
> Cari zarico.(2)

Loosely translated: "I'm thinking what you're thinking, pretty girl. Hot bean soup. When the moon dances the séga, we'll harvest. Hot bean soup." It seems safe to assume that bean soup was not uppermost on the singer's mind, yet the singers use the expression "cari zarico" as a repetitive, seemingly unrelated chorus throughout the song. When I asked LaSelve about this, he told me that singing about beans was part of a musical tradition called "séga zarico" which exists on Rodrigue and several other Creole-speaking islands in the Indian Ocean. The traditional dance associated with this music re-enacts the planting of beans, the woman walking backwards pretending to make a hole with her heel and the man walking toward her, placing an imaginary seed in the hole and covering it with his foot. The obvious connection

between beans and dance, harvest and fertility rituals among Indian Ocean Creoles led me to believe that a look beyond the surface of the Louisiana Creole zarico tradition might prove interesting.

Louisiana Creole and Rodrigue Creole cultures share similar origins and development patterns. They were both colonized by French planters in the 18th century. The first slaves brought to the Indian Ocean islands were not from nearby East Africa, but from the west coast, the same area exploited for the American slave trade. Both cultures speak closely related varieties of French-based Creole. Both share preoccupations derived from a common heritage, such as the setting sun and the rising moon, stemming both from harvest rituals and ordinances which forbad slaves to be away from the plantation after dark. From Rodrigue, we hear:

Soleil couché, maman, la lune levé no allé.
O hé la saison là.
La saison, la saison, la saison là no allé.
O hé la saison là...(3)

and from Louisiana:

O soleil aprés coucher,
O la lune aprés lever.
Mmm, mon nègre est pas arrivé.

Mmm, malheureux, nègre,
O c'est malheureux...

O mais quinze jours passés,
O les promesses tu m'as fait,
O chère amie, mon nègre.

O soleil apé coucher
Toi connais la promesse tu me fais moi
Sur un jeudi soir qui passé.

O la lune après lever,
O soleil après coucher,
Mmm, là-bas chez Moreau.
O cherche ton candi nègre...(4)

In Louisiana, instrumental dance bands play waltzes and two-steps. In Rodrigue, they play waltzes and ségas. But in both cultures, they are built around an accordion, a fiddle and a triangle. Since they share so many elements, it is at least plausible that their preoccupation with beans is more than coincidental.

The languages of West African tribes affected by the slave trade provide some clues as to the origins of zarico. In at least a dozen languages from this culture area of Africa, the phonemes "za," "ré," and "go" are frequently associated with dancing and/or playing (music), most notably among the Yula where "a zaré" means "I dance."(5) It does not require stretching linguistics very far to find a possible connection between the roots "za" and "r(" and the proverbial expression concerning unsalted snapbeans, even if the recurring refrain about "les haricots" took the older sounds, no longer understood, and distorted them into more familiar, intelligible words, changing their denotation while preserving their connotation.

In South Louisiana, the meaning of zarico has expanded (or survived) to refer to dance as a social event and dance styles as well as the music associated with them(6): Creoles go to a zarico to dance the zarico to zarico music played by zarico musicians. The term is used to exhort dancers, as in the opening of Clifton Chenier's "Les zaricos sont pas salés:"

> Clifton: Hé, toi. Tout quelque chose est correct?
> Cleveland: C'est bon boy.
> Clifton: Tout quelque chose est magnifique, hein?
> Cleveland: O ouais. Qui toi veux dire avec ça?
> Clifton: Allons les haricots (zarico), nègre!
> Cleveland: Allons couri à la yé(7)

If zarico, or haricots, means only beans, then this sentence is not

grammatically sound: "Let's go the beans." Yet neither Clifton Chenier nor most of his Creole compatriots are in the habit of speaking nonsense. Used in this expanded way, as a verb, zarico seems to have other meanings: "Let's zarico them;" or "Let's go zarico." One connotation seems to be associated generally with Creole music and dancing. There are many examples of this usage, including "Nous va zarico," and "Zarico toute la nuit," or in English, "Zarico, baby!" "Zarico down!" and "We gonna zarico all night long." Community musicians are described as zarico kings, queens and princes. Community dance events, which provide the primary opportunity for courtship, are announced as zaricos. Dance events are also referred to as "la-la's" or simply French dances, to distinguish black Creole events from disco or soul parties.

Based on "Hip et Taiau," a French Acadian folksong about two thieving dogs, Clifton's version continues to tell basically the same story, but adds the seemingly unrelated bridges about unsalted beans:

O Momma!
Quoi elle va faire avec le nègre.
Les haricots est pas salés.
Les haricots est pas salés.
T'as volé mon traineau.
T'as volé mon traineau.

'Garde les Hip et Taiau.
'Garde les Hip et Taiau.
'Garde les Hip et Taiau.
'Garde les Hip et Taiau.(7)

The occurence of the expression, "Les haricots sont pas salés," in the seemingly unrelated bridges of many Louisiana Creole songs from the Lomax collection as well as in modern zarico music suggests origins beyond its functional folk etymology. In a 1934 Lomax recording, Wilbur

Charles, a Creole migrant farm worker, concludes an unusual song, again borrowed from French Acadian tradition, about Italians lying in ditches apparently ill from having eaten rotten bananas with the following verses:

Quoi il 'n a? Quoi il 'n avec ma femme?
Ma femme, elle est malade, couchée côté des les vieux Dégos.
Dégo.

Les haricots sont pas salés.

Quoi il 'n a, mon cher ami?
Quoi il 'n a?

Les haricots sont pas salés.
O yaie! O mon nègre!
Les haricots sont pas salés.

Pas mis de la viande, pas mis à rien,
Juste des haricots dans la chaudière.
Les haricots sont pas salés. (8)

The beans are unsalty because the cook has no meat to add to the pot. Before the days of free-running table salt, the most common way of salting sauces, soups and beans was to add salt meat. Families too poor to afford salt meat, ate unsalted beans. "Les haricots sont pas salés," then, refers to hard times and, by association, to the music that helped to endure them. In black American tradition, this music is called the blues, whether it be a "low-down" blues lament which relieves by purging or a jumping, juking blues which relieves by distracting, as in the lively song by Delton Broussard and the Lawtell Playboys about a condemned man standing at the door of his aunt's house and asking her to pray for him to help save his soul from the flames of hell:

J'ai cogné à la porte.
J'ai crié, "Hello."
Elle dit, "Qui c'est qu'est là?"
J'ai dit, "C'est ton neveux."
Elle dit, "Qui c'est tu veux?"
J'ai dit, "Priez pour moi.
Je suis condamné
Pour la balance de mes jours.
Priez pour moi.
Sauvez mon âme.
Je suis condamné
Pour les flammes d'enfer."(9)

"Zarico" in Louisiana French, like "blues" in American English, describes hard times and the music which expresses them and eases the pain. Zarico's bluesy side is sometimes based on melodies and rhythms which resemble delta blues tradition. Other times, as in Canray Fontenot's "Barres de la prison," in 3/4 time, an interesting confluence of European and Afro-Caribbean rhythms and sources produces haunting songs which function equally well as blues laments and as waltzes.

Goodbye, chère vieille Mam.
Goodbye, pauvre vieux Pap.
Goodbye à mes frères
Et mes chères petites soeurs.
Moi, j'ai été condamné
Pour la balance de ma vie
Dans les prison.

Moi, j'ai roulé
Je m'ai mis à malfaire.
J'avais la tête dure.
J'ai rentré dans le tracas.
Asteur, je suis condamné
Pour la balance de ma vie
Dans les barres de la prisn.
Ma chère vieille maman,
Elle s'a mis dessus ses genoux,
Ses deux mains sur la tête
En priant pour moi.
Elle fait, "Mmmmm,
Cher petit garçon,
Moi, je vas jamais te revoir.
Toi, t'as été condamné
Pour la balance de ta vie

Dans les barres de la prison.

J'ai dit, "Chère vieille maman,
Pleure pas pour moi.
Faut tu pries pour ton enfant
Pour essayer de sauver son âme
De les flammes de l'enfer."(10)

An important step in the development of what is now called zarico was juré tradition, recorded in Louisiana by Alan Lomax during 1934. The Louisiana Creole counterpart of French Acadian "danses rondes" and Anglo-American play party songs, these unaccompanied group songs resemble the Rodriguais séga zaricos in style and beat as well as in the frequent, seemingly unrelated reference to beans in the chorus or bridge. Jurés, derived from the French word for "sworn," or "testified," are the Louisiana French parallel for shouts and spirituals resulting from the blending of Afro-Caribbean, French-Acadian and southern Protestant traditions(11). Some texts were religious, as in the case of "Feel Like Dying in His Army," a bilingual recording made by Lomax in 1934:

O Lord, Lord, Lord, my God.
Feel like dying in His army.
O oui, mon cher ami, o quoi tu vas faire?
Feel like dying in His army.
O quoi tu vas faire, comment, hein, petit monde?
Feel like dying in His army.
O oui, ma petite, si to pries pas.
Feel like dying in His army.
O si to pries pas tu vas brûler dans l'enfer.
Feel like dying in His army...(12)

Others were secular, adapting the story line of French-Acadian folk songs to a highly sycopated Afro-Creole style(13), as in the case of Clifton Chenier's "Les haricots sont pas salés," and of several Lomax recordings, like "Je veux me marier, je peux pas trouver," based

on "Je veux me marier, mais les poules pendent pas":

Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver,
O, c'est malheureux.
Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver,
Mais comment donc je vas faire.

Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver,
Mais Mam et Pap veut pas.
Je veux me marier,
Je peux pas trouver,
Mais o, c'est malheureux.

Je veux me marier,
J'ai pas d'argent,
J'ai pas de souliers,
Mais o, c'est malheureux.
Comment donc
Tu veux moi, je fais,
Mais comme un pauvre misérable...(14)

Juré singers provided dance music during times like Lent or official mourning periods when instrumental music was forbidden, or whenever musicians couldn't be found or afforded. Lomax called juré style "the most African sound I found in America." The singers are accompanied only by improvised percussion (stamping feet, clapping hands, spoons rubbed on corrugated washboards...), with a vocal counterpoint.

Sexuality is a common feature in African tradition and survives in Afro-American cultural expression. "Jazz" and "rock" which describe other related Afro-American musical styles originally were euphemisms for making love in the black oral tradition.(15) The connection between music, dance and sexuality may give additional clues to the origins and meaning of zarico. In "J'ai fait tout le tour du pays," based on the French Acadian "J'ai fait tout le tour du grand bois," the story line

concerns a frustrated young lover who cannot visit his sweetheart because he is poor (his clothes are tattered, his horse is sickly...), but the bridge is another of those complaints about unsalted beans. If one considers that "zarico" has possible roots in fertility rituals, however, a relationship appears between the bridge and the verses which describe frustration in courtship.

J'ai fait tout le tour du pays
Avec ma joque au plombeau
Et j'ai demandé à ton père pour dix-huit piastres, chérie.
Il m'a donné que cinq piastres.

O Mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais o chéri, les haricots sont pas salés.
O Mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

Toi, comment tu veux je te vas voir
Mais quand mon chapeau rouge est fini.
Toi, comment tu veux je te vas voir
Mais quand mon suit est tout déchiré.

O Mam, mais donnez-moi les haricots.
Mais o yé yaie, les haricots sont pas salés.

J'ai fait tout le tour du pays
Avec ma joque sur le plombeau.
J'ai demandé à ton père pour dix piastres.
Il m'a donné que cinq....(16)

Juré and zarico may be even more directly linked to courtship--and its results. The Rodrigue dance tradition described earlier is obviously associated with fertility rituals. In ante bellum Louisiana, part of the planters' systematic efforts to eradicate their slaves' African heritage included outlawing slave dances like the calinda. The pretext that they were lascivious was not entirely unfounded, however. Descriptions of these dances suggest that they may have been associated with African fertility rituals.(17) Contemporary black Creole dance styles associated with zarico are often considered suggestive, to say

the least, by Cajun and Anglo-American observers. Zarico lyrics are often more than suggestive. It doesn't take blues scholars long to figure out the sexual metaphors in such songs as Blind Lemon Jefferson's "Black Snake Blues." Nor is there much doubt about the meaning of Canray Fontenot's "Joe Pitre a deux femmes," Buckwheat Zydeco's "Give Me a Good Time Woman," Boozoo Chavis' "I'm Going to Dog Hill" ("where the pretty women're at"), and Clifton Chenier's "I'm a Hog for You, Baby" ("rooting, rooting around your door"). Much of Afro-American expressive culture features double-entendre and sexual imagery, often using foods as euphemisms for female sexual organs (e.g., cabbage, cookie, cake, jelly roll, shortening bread).(18)

There is an unmistakable tendency toward soul and rhythm-and-blues among contemporary Louisiana Creole musicians. Yet the same band leaders who insist on singing English lyrics and adding saxophones, trumpets and electric guitars in their groups demonstrate their deep understanding of the essential tradition when they play what they sometimes call "du vrai zarico." After receiving a Grammy in 1984, Clifton Chenier, commented, "Soul didn't get me that Grammy. Rock-and-roll didn't get me that Grammy. Zarico got me that Grammy." Whether he's in a local dance hall or on the main stage of a major festival, he never fails to include some of the "real stuff" which features his brother Cleveland on frottoir and Robert St. Judy on drums. The rest of the Red Hot Louisiana Band drops out while Clifton and the percussionists beat out a jumping rhythm. Clifton transforms his accordion into a melodic drum, using it almost like an African thumb piano. The "real stuff" is marked by exclusively French vocals

and a percussive frenzy which clearly reveal that the style originated in the cultural creolization of Afro-Caribbean and Franco-American traditions.

Whatever its linguistic origins, zarico is, like the blues and rock and roll, a product of the American blending process with a strong African base. But like its fellow Louisiana product, jazz, zarico has an important French element. A few years ago, Alan Lomax predicted that zarico could become as big as reggae, another result of the creolization process. At the time, I found that hard to believe because of the language barrier of hard-core zarico. Yet, a gradual drift towards English lyrics has occurred, especially over the last decade, as the tradition is adopted by younger Creoles who speak less and less French. Beyond South Louisiana, Queen Ida's 1982 Grammy, Clifton Chenier's 1984 Grammy for "I'm Here," (his most English-oriented album to date) and Rocking Sidney's 1986 Grammy for "Don't Mess With My Toot Toot" have lots of folks, from Patti LaBelle and Fats Domino to John Fogarty and Paul Simon, interested in zarico.

Of course, what pop zarico for national consumption gains in understandability, it loses in other important areas, including contact with its French elements and intangibles that I would attribute to the social warmth (and even heat) of South Louisiana Creole dance halls. But the form is undeniably enjoying some national attention. In South Louisiana, a veritable army of young Creole bands, like Buckwheat Zydeco, the Sam Brothers and Terrence Semien and the Mallet Playboys, have become interested in the music of their heritage. A few Cajun bands, like Wayne Toups and the ZydeCajun Band and Z.A.A.B. (the Zydeco

All-American Band), have also jumped on the zarico bandwagon. Old masters like Clifton Chenier and Rocking Doopsie are in constant demand for tours to the rest of America, and in Europe and Africa. Musicians like Queen Ida and Jim McDonald are busy providing the west and east coasts with echos from the Gulf coast. The local music scene is already feeling the effects of the current fad and it is possible that the national scene may also be affected by zarico. Zarico may be tempted by its brush with national appeal and move into the fast lane, like one of its counterparts, jazz, developing in new directions and gradually distancing itself from the traditions which gave it birth. Classic zarico might then be relegated to a few South Louisiana versions of Preservation Hall. Or maybe zarico will survive imitation and commercialization, like another of its counterparts, the blues. Or maybe the fad will pass and south Louisiana Creoles will continue to dance their blues away around their own musical pot of unsalted beans.

FOOTNOTES

(1) Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (Oxford, London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), describes a similar blending process in Afro-American music which produced "a hybrid with a strong African base," p. 24.

(2) From "Cari zarico," group Camaron, Rodrigue, 1980; field recording by Jean-Pierre LaSelve.

(3) From "Soleil couché, maman, la lune levé, no allé," group Camaron, Rodrigue, 1980; field recording by Jean-Pierre LaSelve.

(4) From "Là-bas chez Moreau," Cleveland Benoit and Darby Hicks, Jennings, 1934; field recording by Alan Lomax; Archive of Folk Song (AFS) 81a1.

(5) The following references, in Wilhelm Koelle Sigismund's, Polyglotta Africana (Graz, Austria: Academische Druck, 1963), are from the western coast of Africa and inland:

Region IV:

Yula:	a za're	I dance
Kasm:	a sa	I dance
Gurma:	me dsére	I play & I dance

Region IX:

Divala:	na sa'	I dance

Region XII:

Landoma (Wolof family):	i pisa	I dance
Asante:	ma saçmére sa	I dance
	mére go	I play (music)
Murundo:	ndsakaka	I dance

Region IX:

Nhalemoc:	n'sa	I dance
Mélon:	nsae	I dance
Ngoten:	nsaa	I dance

(6) Levine maintains that "in America as in Africa Negro music, both vocal and instrumental, was intimately tied to body movement" (p. 16).

(7) From "Les haricots sont pas salés," Clifton Chenier, *Classic Clifton, Arhoolie 1082.

(8) From "Dégo," Wilbur Charles, New Iberia, 1934; field recording by Alan Lomax; AFS 11a1.

(9) From "Flammes d'enfer," Delton Broussard and the Lawtell Playboys, Zodico, Swallow 6009.

(10) "Barres de la prison," Canray Fontenot, Boisec: La Musique créole, Arhoolie 1070.

(11) The term "juré" also raises the possibility of linguistic connections beyond its obvious religious origins. The phoneme "ré" is also associated with music and dancing on the west coast of Africa. 93-year old Cajun fiddler Dennis McGee uses "juré" in "Adieu, Rosa" (Dennis McGee and Sady Courville, La Vieille Musique acadienne, Swallow 6030) a dance tune he learned from black musicians around the turn of the century.

Adieu, Rosa.

Merci Bon Dieu,

Demain, c'est pas dimanche.

Merci bon Dieu,

Rosa, t'es pas ma soeur.

Juré, my Lord!

Translated: Good-bye Rosa, thank God tomorrow is not Sunday. Good-bye, Rosa, thank God you're not my sister. Juré, my Lord." When I asked Dennis McGee what the part about juré meant, he said, "I don't know, but you're supposed to yell it every now and then during the song to excite the dancers."

(12) From "Feel like Dying in His Army," Austin Coleman, Washington and Sampson Brown, Jennings, 1934; field recording by Alan Lomax; AFS 111a1.

(13) In a similar vein, see Gilbert Chase, America's Music (New York, 1966), 235-236: "The English musician Henry Russell, who lived in the U.S. in the 1830's, was forcibly struck by the ease with which a slave congregation in Vicksburg, Mississippi, took a 'fine old Psalm tune' and by suddenly and spontaneously accelerating the tempo, transformed it 'into a kind of negro melody.'" Quoted in Levine, p. 26.

(14) From "Je veux me marier," Jimmy Peters and the juré singers, Jennings, 1934; field recording by Alan Lomax; AFS 79b2.

(15) See, for example, Levine, p. 243.

(16) From "J'ai fait tout le tour du pays," Jimmy Peters and the juré singers, Jennings, 1934; field recording by Alan Lomax; AFS 79a1.

(17) From 18th century accounts in the Louisiana Colonial Records Collection, University of Southwestern Louisiana; and various 19th century issues of Century and Scribner's magazines. It is also interesting to note here that salé can also connote naughty or risqué, as in un conte salé, a dirty joke.

(18) Levine, p. 242.

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